MASS COMMUNICATION AS PARTICIPATION: ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF AN IDEA

By

WILLIAM J. LEONHIRTH

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For my parents, Tennette and William Leonhirth.

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By

William J. Leonhirth

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Chairman: David H. Ostroff
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Non-physical – social or intellectual – constructions play a role in the conduct of human action, and evaluations of these constructions require analytical tools that do not depend upon empirical measurements. Proposed is an evaluative framework for ideas as agents of social action. Elements of the framework include: what is the idea, what was its purpose, what were its origins, how and under what conditions did it evolve, with what ideas was it in competition, and what was its effectiveness? Under study was the role of the participatory idea of mass communication, construction of mass communication as participation in social, economic, and political processes, during the 1920s, the 1970s, and the 1980s as new communication technologies were coming into use and prominence in the United States. The inauguration and rapid growth of broadcasting in the 1920s, debate about the expansion of cable television into major urban areas in the early 1970s, and the introduction of interactive communication systems in the 1970s and 1980s came amid conflicting constructions of mass communication and its effects in society. Broadcasting,

for the first time, offered simultaneous receipt of mass media messages. Cable television offered opportunities for transmission of broadcast-like content to mass audiences, for narrowcasting to special-interest groups, and for two-way transmission of information. Interactive technologies essentially changed both the site for participation and the discourse about the participatory idea of mass communication. The technologies offered actual participation of audience members in the origination of content and from the convenience of their homes. Audience members' involvement would be direct and not a socially constructed or intellectually constructed participation. The evaluative framework, in use, does not determine the validity of the participatory idea at any point but only can analyze its use in competition with other ideas. Refinement of the framework is necessary for analysis of ideas not specifically related to communication, but use of such a framework offers opportunities for analysis of social and intellectual constructions in competition.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

Computer-based communication technologies make available to the individual the ability to contact personally thousands of other persons. Through electronic mail and teleconferencing systems, the individual now can post messages that go to a large audience or participate in teleconferences with groups of persons with similar interests. Notions of mass communication and interpersonal communication are converging as rapidly as telephone, computer, and television technologies. Changes in communications technologies already have brought communication scholar Elihu Katz's elegy for journalism in an analysis of coverage of the Persian Gulf War.[1] Elegies for mass communication also may be appropriate with ongoing and planned diversity of information outlets and further narrowing of target audiences for media.[2]

With rapid changes in communication technologies are coming predictions of transformations in daily life, the economy, and political processes.[3] Billion-dollar business deals are occurring as efforts come to develop government and business strategies to deal with these technological and communication changes. "Information

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[1]Elihu Katz, "The End of Journalism? Notes on Watching the War," Journal of Communication 42.3 (1992): 5.

[2]*See* John Merrill and Ralph Lowenstein, Media, Messages, and Men (New York: Longman, 1979) 264.

[3]*See* Nicholas Negroponte, Being Digital (New York: Knopf, 1995).

superhighway," "cyberspace," and "virtual reality" have become buzzwords for the possibility of an impending or continuing technology revolution.

The individual consumer already is facing an array of products and services for entertainment and communication and the promise of greater choice and control through "video-on-demand," five-hundred cable channels, and interactive messaging. Consumers will be purchasing services through telecommunications, broadcasting, cable, or computer industries or a combination of some or all of them. Some individuals already have become residents of an "electronic neighborhood" through the Internet, a world-wide linking of computer networks, with both "chat lines" that have the anonymity of a "CB" radio channel and the intellectual stimulus of a "Usenet" or "news group." Electronic mail on Internet provides an inexpensive means to communicate with correspondents around the nation or around the world. Already questions are arising as to who will and will not have access to the full resources and power of an "information superhighway" or "national information infrastructure."[4]

Predictions that an "information revolution" will bring changes in individuals' lives and society also have brought critiques from those who argue that technology developments will not bring any changes in communication processes or the economic or social framework in which they exist.[5] Cees J. Hamelink in 1986 challenged even the notion of an information revolution, since he noted that history is a continuum:

> What we experience in our time could be explained as a mere continuation of a historical process that does not have one fixed and uncontested point of departure. Rather than thinking in terms of revolutionary change from the past, the

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[4]*See* National Telecommunications and Information Administration, "The National Information Infrastructure: Agenda for Action," 58 Fed. Reg. 49,028 (1993).

[5]Jennifer Daryl Slack, Communication Technologies and Society: Conceptions of Causality and the Politics of Technological Intervention (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1984) 146.

information society could be described as a logical successor to previous historical phases.[6]

James W. Carey in 1989 indicated that "the celebration of the electronic revolution is a process whereby the world of scholarship contributes to the cults of engineering, mobility, and fashion at the expense of roots, tradition, and political organization."[7] Janet Wasko in 1992 contended that research, so far, on the "information revolution" merely has traced the development of communications technologies and their future applications, but of greater concern should be "who owns the technology, who controls it, and who has access to it."[8]

James W. Chesebro and Donald G. Bonsall wrote in 1989 that transition to "computer-mediated communication" will dominate information exchanges, alter how people execute their daily lives, affect users' lifestyles and values, and alter human communication itself.[9] Although computer-mediated communication describes the current state of the technology, no term for the combined capability for mass media and point-to-point communication has yet received popular or scholarly acceptance. Various authors have grappled with the effort, but none has yet found an appropriate word or phrase for what may be a new era of communication.

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[6]Cees J. Hamelink, "Is There Life After the Information Revolution?" The Myth of the Information Revolution: Social and Ethical Implications of Communication Technology, ed. Michael Traber (London, Sage, 1986) 8.

[7]James W. Carey, Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988) 136.

[8]Janet Wasko, "Go Tell It to the Spartans." Democratic Communications in the Information Age, ed. Janet Wasko and Vincent Mosco (Toronto, Garamond Press, 1992) 4-5.

[9]James W. Chesebro and Donald G. Bonsall, Computer-Mediated Communication: Human Relationships in a Computerized World (Tuscaloosa, U of Alabama P, 1989) 7.

Although computer-mediated communication has received some currency,[10] researchers also have described the process as interactive communication[11] and "telelogic" communication.[12] Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Kathleen Reardon described "telelogic" or distant communication with computers in comparison with "monologic" or one-way mass communication and "duologic" or two-way interpersonal communication.[13] Enabling technologies have received designation as new communication technologies, emerging communication technologies, and "collaborative" mass media.[14] Research has attempted to reconcile computer communication with traditional notions of interpersonal communication and mass communication.[15] Development of such interactive communication also has required some re-evaluations of these notions.[16]

Transition from a mass communication era to a new, still-unnamed era of computer-based communication has been the subject of scholarly attention for more than

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[10]Chesebro and Bonsall 6-7 .

[11]Gary Gumpert and Robert Cathcart, Inter/Media: Interpersonal Communication in a Media World (New York: Oxford UP, 1982) 10.

[12]Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach and Kathleen Reardon, "Monologue, Dialogue, and Telelog: Comparing an Emergent Form of Communication with Traditional Forms," Advancing Communication Science: Merging Mass and Interpersonal Communication, ed. Robert P. Hawkins, John M. Wiemann, and Suzanne Pingree. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1988) 137.

[13]Ball-Rokeach and Reardon 137.

[14]Sheizaf Rafaeli and Robert J. LaRose, "Electronic Bulletin Boards and 'Public Goods' Explanations of Collaborative Mass Media," Communication Research 20 (1993): 277-97.

[15]Charles W. Steinfield and Janet Fulk, "Computer-Mediated Communication Systems as Mass Communication Media," Telecommunications Policy Research Conference, Airlie House, VA, October 1988.

[16]*See* Richard Maisel, "The Decline of Mass Media," Decline of the Global Village: How Specialization is Changing the Mass Media, ed. James E. Grunig (Bayside, NY: General Hall, 1976).

two decades.[17] Study of mass communication began, in the 1920s, after concentration of populations in cities in the aftermath of the industrial revolution. Sociological studies that examined effects of the transition from interpersonal communication to mass communication included both those scholars who saw mass communication as a cohesive force for individuals in an impersonal "mass society"[18] and scholars who saw mass communication as one of several exploiters of the "atomized" individuals in the industrial age.[19] Although Harold Innis traced the effects of changes in communications technologies on social organization through history,[20] his work preceded the emergence of television broadcasting as the dominant mass medium in the 1960s. His student, Marshall McLuhan, provided one view of the technological future in the wake of television with the notion of the "global village."[21] A counter view was the notion of the electronic "cocoon" in which individuals would isolate themselves from each other.[22]

Purpose

This dissertation proposes a theoretical framework for evaluating the large-scale social effects of mass communication, including computer-mediated communication. Examination of the transition to a new communication era required a review of past theories of the interrelationship between social organization and communication. A distinction

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[17]Maisel 73.

[18]James W. Carey 15.

[19]James T. Carey, Sociology and Public Affairs: The Chicago School, Sage Library of Social Research 16 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1975) 23.

[20]Harold A. Innis, The Bias of Communication (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1964) 3.

[21]Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964) 5.

[22]John Merrill and Ralph Lowenstein, Media, Messages, and Men (New York: Longman, 1979) 264.

particularly has to come between notions of "communication" and "mass communication" since new technologies are altering substantially concepts of "mass" communication. Development of an evaluative framework for new communication technologies and their large-scale social effects also requires some distinction between the role of communication processes and the role of media institutions.[23] Although Wasko's question about who will control the processes of communication is relevant, interactive technologies may allow individuals or groups to by-pass mass media institutions and communicate directly to large audiences. Policy-makers face the task of determining whether that capability will continue with a "national information infrastructure."

This dissertation examines the development of certain fields of research in sociology and mass communication, relevant theories of these fields, the relationship of sociological and communication theories, and the role of post-modern thought in the development of an evaluative framework for large-scale social effects of computer-mediated communication. Foundations for this study involve a broader perspective for mass communication research than merely the organization or operation of institutions of mass media or the processes of transmission that bring mass media messages to audience members. Although some critical scholarship has examined mass communication as ideological, particularly as a tool of hegemony, proposed here is something more pragmatic. Ideology carries negative connotations of domination and artifice to masquerade domination. Karl Mannheim in his study of ideology attempted to move past that negative connotation,[24] and Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann effectively promoted the notion

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[23]James D. Halloran, "The Sociological Implications of Technological Innovations in Communication," The Myth of the Information Revolution: Social and Ethical Implications of Communication Technology, ed. Michael Traber (London: Sage, 1986) 46-7.

[24]Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, 1936).

of the social construction of reality.[25] US pragmatism, as Marxism, also had countered idealism with the stance that ideas have their origins in practice. Borrowing both from social construction of reality and pragmatism, this dissertation will posit that ideas are agents of social action. They come into being, evolve or change, and, in some cases, cease existence as practical conditions change. Study of these processes requires historical analysis and sociological insights, at least, but such study is itself only a heuristic tool and may have limited causal or explanatory value. Presenteded here is an analysis of the development of the idea of receipt of mass communication messages as participation in political, social, and economic processes, evolution of the idea, and its possible demise in the 1980s and 1990s with increasing media diversity and opportunities for "interactive communication" and "virtual reality."

Re-evaluations

Development of computer-based communication systems have brought into common usage terms that seem, on their face, redundant – "interactive communication" and '"virtual reality." Communication, in most of its connotations, is an interchange or interaction. A notable exception is the mass communication that is a one-way transfer of information between mass media institutions and audience members. Audience response, such as it occurs on a delayed basis, has received the characterization of "feedback," as in the information theory of Norbert Wiener.[26] The more recent term of "interactive communication" could receive a better phrasing as "interactive mass communication" since individuals, with computer technology, now have the same capacity as mass media institutions to send messages to large audiences. Work is under way to situate computer-

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[25]Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Anchor, 1966).

[26]Norbert Wiener, Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine (New York: Technology Press, 1948) 114.

based communication in a spectrum of the high interaction of interpersonal communication and the low, or non-existent, interaction of mass communication.[27] What the new computer communications systems may require is a comprehensive re-evaluation of communication nomenclature.

Similarly, development of virtual reality systems may help to integrate communication research with broader intellectual queries into the meaning and nature of reality. The term "virtual reality" carries an assumption of a fixed or absolute reality that computer simulations can only mimic. Phenomenologists, among others, would argue that all perceived reality is virtual. Computer simulations are no different in their mimicry than sensory perceptions and cognitive simulations of reality. To argue for such multiple "realities" is not necessarily to deny some fixed reality but rather to question sensory and cognitive capacity to reconstruct fully such a reality. To come in line with Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action[28] is to assert that communication is the negotiation of reality. Such a theory is in contrast to models that follow what philosopher Jon Elster described as "one of the most persisting cleavages in the social sciences in the

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[27]*See* John Durham Peters, "The Gaps of Which Communication is Made," Critical Studies in Mass Communication 11 (1994): 117-41; Barbara O'Keefe, "Against Theory," Journal of Communication 43.3 (1993): 78-86; Sheizaf Rafaeli and Robert J. LaRose, "Electronic Bulletin Boards and 'Public Goods' Explanations of Collaborative Mass Media," Communication Research 20 (1993): 277-97; James W. Chesebro and Donald G. Bonsall, Computer-Mediated Communication: Human Relationships in a Computerized World (Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1989); Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach and Kathleen Reardon, "Monologue, Dialogue, and Telelog: Comparing an Emergent Form of Communication with Traditional Forms," Advancing Communication Science: Merging Mass and Interpersonal Communication, ed. Robert P. Hawkins, John M. Wiemann, and Suzanne Pingree. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1988) 137; Charles W. Steinfield and Janet Fulk, "Computer-Mediated Communication Systems as Mass Communication Media," Telecommunications Policy Research Conference, Airlie House, VA, October 1988; Gary Gumpert and Robert Cathcart, Inter/Media: Interpersonal Communication in a Media World (New York: Oxford UP, 1982) 10.

[28]*See* Jürgen Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action, 2 vols., trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Bacon Press, 1981).

opposition between the lines of thought conveniently associated with Adam Smith and Emile Durkheim, between *homo economicus* and *homo sociologicus*."[29]

In a social model, communication represents social order or a process to gain social order. Theoretical foundations for the social model include the ideal of empathetic communication such as Ferdinand Tonnies's *Gemeinschaft* represents,[30] the notion of social organization of the Chicago School of Sociology that indicates that social order requires common meanings and shared values,[31] and structural-functionalism, with its notion of organic interdependence.[32] In the social model, communication involves the interests of the group and is a collective process. By its nature, a social model involves two-way or interactive communication. The media of a social model are intermediaries or provide a milieu for social or cultural interaction.

In an economic model, communication represents a resource for information or a commodity. Theoretical foundations involve utilitarianism and rational choice. Communication involves interests of the individual. Assumptions of an economic model are that the interests of a group are the aggregate of the interests of individuals and that communication is a discrete rather than a collective process. Flow of information is one-way since the medium is an institution or a source of information.

Although interpersonal communication would seem to fit automatically into the social model and mass media would seem to represent the economic model, social

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[29]Jon Elster, The Cement of Society: Studies in Rationality and Social Change (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989) 97.

[30]*See* Ferdinand Tonnies, Community and Society, trans. Charles P. Loomis (East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 1957).

[31]James T. Carey 23.

[32]*See* Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949); Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure: Toward the Codification of Theory and Research (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949).

organization work of the Chicago School of Sociology and the medium-system dependency theory of Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach[33] would support the view that mass media serve social roles. Mass media in *Gesellschaft* replace the traditional social linkages of family and tribe. Both social and economic models of communication also include normative as well as descriptive functions. If communication is necessary for social organization, can more effective communication prevent social disorganization? If communication provides information for good decision-making, will more effective communication improve decision-making?

Habermas in The Theory of Communicative Action in 1981 identified the social and economic models as two points of departure for a systems-theoretical approach.[34] Habermas explicated two additional models, dramaturgical and communicative action. Habermas indicated that the dramaturgical model, which involves presentation of self for group interaction, has use in phenomenological descriptions of interaction but had not become an approach for general theory.[35] Communicative action extends the notion of symbolic interaction: "The actors seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement."[36] Habermas posits a model of rational discourse as a means to maintain social order.[37] As use of computer networks in communications systems raises questions about the future of mass communication and the consequences of the convergence of communication technologies, these questions about the nature and practice of intellectual inquiry are providing new approaches to analysis of human communication. A theoretical framework

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[33]*See* Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach, Theories of Mass Communication, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 1989).

[34]Habermas, vol. II 376.

[35]Habermas, vol. I 86.

[36]Habermas, vol. I 86.

[37]Habermas, vol. I 399.

that analyzes ideas in development and competition offers an evaluative framework for communication as the negotiation of reality and mass communication as the currency of resulting and competing ideas.

Proposed here to assist development of this evaluative framework for macrosocial effects of computer-based communication systems is the analysis of one specific idea of mass communication – collective participation of individuals in social, political, and economic affairs through their roles as members of audiences of mass media. The key word in that description is "participation." Participation extends the involvement of audience members beyond the mere perception of and cognitive processing of mass media messages. This "participatory" idea of mass communication is a component of the construction of communication as a social condition or a process to maintain social conditions. The construction of communication as social includes the role of communication in providing social linkages whether through interpersonal or technical means.

Definitions

Central to this analysis and development of a new theoretical framework are understanding of pragmatism, the social construction of reality, and mass communication itself. Pragmatism and the social construction of reality provide the theoretical foundations for the analysis, and mass communication is the subject of the analysis. The varying uses of the term, mass communication, are central to analysis, particularly since the dissertation argues that mass communication is an idea or social construction as well as process, milieu, and medium.

Pragmatism

Pragmatism, which began with the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, was something of a revolt against intellectualism.[38] Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey led the development of pragmatism, identified as the first distinctively American philosophy.[39] Pragmatism involves a transactional approach between humans and ideas and varies in its explication with cultural and historical settings.[40] At the basis of most of the American academic initiatives in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was the pragmatic approach of James and Dewey.[41] James tied pragmatism to empiricism and encouraged the study of the experience of humans rather than theoretical assumptions about the causes of their behavior.[42] Dewey moved pragmatic thought into the study of politics, education, and communication.[43]

James, in 1909, clarified the advantages of pragmatism:

> Pragmatism represents a perfectly familiar attitude in philosophy, the empiricist attitude, but it represents it, as it seems to me, both in a more radical and in a less objectionable form than it has ever yet assumed. A pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once and for all upon a lot of inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers. He turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad *a priori* reasons, fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towards power.[44]

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[38]William James, Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (New York: Longman, 1980) 51.

[39]Cornel West, The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989) 5.

[40]Russell B. Goodman, ed., Pragmatism: A Contemporary Reader (New York: Routledge, 1995) 2-3.

[41]Gerald E. Myers, William James: His Life and Thought (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986) 15.

[42]James, Pragmatism 58.

[43]Jerome Nathanson, John Dewey: The Reconstruction of the Democratic Life (New York: Scribner's, 1951) 105.

[44]James, Pragmatism 51.

James's writings on pragmatism provided support both for the philosophy and an empirical and "objective" approach to social science.[45] James wrote: "Against rationalism as pretension and a method pragmatism is fully armed and militant. But, at the outset, at least, it stands for no particular trends."[46] James said pragmatism "represented the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed necessities; and looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts."[47]

James, in his Principles of Psychology, had described the notions that man was more than a rational creature and that instinct and environment both played roles in human nature.[48] Experience plays a role in mental processes and helped to establish those processes. James wrote:

> The connection of the reality of things with their effectiveness as motives is a tale that has never yet been fully told. The moral tragedy of human life comes almost wholly from the fact that the link is ruptured which normally should hold between vision of the truth and action, and that this pungent sense of effective reality will not attach to certain ideas. Men do not differ so much in their mere feelings and conceptions. Their notions of possibility and their ideals are not as far apart as might be argued from their different fates.[49]

Under such conditions education could play a role in the development of human nature.

Dewey later proposed that education and communication both play key roles. Pragmatism reached its highest point through the work of Dewey, who pioneered development of educational philosophy.[50] Dewey's educational philosophy joined "the

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[45]James, Pragmatism 51.

[46]James, Pragmatism 54.

[47]James, Pragmatism 55.

[48]Myers 55.

[49]William James, Principles of Psychology, vol. 2 (New York: 1890), 547.

[50]West 69.

growth of democracy with the development of experimental method in the sciences, evolutionary ideas in the biological sciences, and the industrial reorganization."[51] Dewey wrote: "The things with which a man varies are his genuine environment."[52] For Dewey, the function of formal education was to allow a young person to reach beyond the extent of the immediate environment by "simplifying and ordering the factors of the disposition it is wished to develop; purifying and idealizing the existing social customs; creating a wider and better balanced environment than that by which the young would be likely, if left to themselves, to be influenced."[53]

Social Construction

Pragmatism also provided a foundation for the development of a sociology of knowledge. As Karl Mannheim acknowledged in Ideology and Utopia the study of ideas requires constant analysis:

> If, therefore, we are to rise to the demands put upon us by the need for analysing modern thought, we must see to it that a sociological history of ideas concerns itself with the actual thought of society, and not merely with self-perpetuating and supposedly self-contained systems of ideas elaborated within a rigid academic tradition.[54]

Mannheim traced the origin of "ideology" to Napoleon and contraposed ideology as a system of ideas against "pragmatism" in which questions of reality inevitably intervene. Mannheim, writing in 1929 in the aftermath of World War I, indicated that the question of "what is really real?"[55] was becoming even more important: "The question as to what

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[51]John Dewey, Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education (New York: Macmillan, 1964) iii.

[52]Dewey 11.

[53]Dewey 22.

[54]Mannheim 73.

[55]Mannheim 72.

constitutes reality is by no means a new one: but that the question should arise in the arena of public discussion (and not just in isolated academic circles) seems to indicate an important change."[56]

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in The Social Construction of Reality posit reality as chimera – as a quality "appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition."[57] Human reality, which is the focus of the analysis, however, is not independent of human volition since human actions, at some point in the past, established or objectified the reality that other humans now perceive as independent. Social construction of reality provides a framework for analysis that if carried to its logical end might even make analysis impossible.

Berger and Luckmann found a vantage point that allowed no fixed point of grounding: "Knowledge about society is thus a realization in the double sense of the word, in the sense of apprehending the objectivated social reality and in the sense of ongoingly producing this reality."[58] The reflexive nature of such an existence simultaneously imbues humans with great power and makes them subject to the forces of social power. Berger and Luckmann succinctly expressed these conditions in three short sentences: "Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product."[59]

While individual human beings inhabit the Earth, the nature of individuality is at once an issue. Individuals experience the world through their senses, but their reactions to those sensations may depend to a great extent on their degree of socialization or their acculturation. The level of individual reality or perceptions of reality brings into question the notion of individuality itself. Can the individual perceive sensations in a matter separate

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[56]Mannheim 73.

[57]Berger and Luckmann 1.

[58]Berger and Luckmann 66.

[59]Berger and Luckmann 61.

from those of his social or cultural group? Interaction between individuals provides similar questions about that level of reality. Communication both defines and has definition from the interaction of individuals.

Similarly, group or societal interactions have their basis in their constructions of reality. Communication at that level of reality may move more into the symbolic interchange of ideas. At the next level of reality, ideas, or knowledge, have become the subject of analysis either in the context of examinations against everyday reality or theoretical discourses. Communication, including mass communication, plays some role in the construction or negotiation of reality.

Mass Communication

Mass communication is a term with varied denotations and connotations. To explicate these shades of meanings is to explore the history of the development of mass media in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the various schools of academic research that have attached themselves to various understandings or constructions of mass communication. To develop a theoretical framework for analysis of macrosocial effects of new communication technologies first will require explication of these constructions.

The definitions of the two component terms, "mass and communication," have helped to provide at least five different constructions of "mass communication." Definitions of "mass" include a "considerable number," "a body of coherent material," and "a collection of incoherent particles."[60] The contradiction of the latter two definitions is indicative of conflicts in the constructions of mass communication. Communication has connotations of the social union of individuals, the sharing or exchange of information, and the linear transmission of information from source to recipient.[61]

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[60]Stuart Berg Flexner, ed., The Random House College Dictionary (New York: Random House, 1973) 822.

[61]Rebecca B. Rubin, Alan M. Rubin, and Linda J. Peile, Communication Research: Strategies and Sources (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1993) 6-9.

Constructions of "mass communication" include the following:

– The widespread dissemination or multiple reproduction of information beyond primary and secondary groups.[62] This construction essentially deals with "mass" as a large quantity or considerable number and "communication" as the transmission of information.

– The transmission of information from an institutional source to a large, anonymous audience through some mechanical or electronic process. This construction retains the notion of "mass" as large quantity and refers to the anonymous audience that receives the transmitted information. Communication generally involves the linear transmission of information, and this construction interposes a machine or an electronic process as an intermediary (medium). Charles R. Wright in 1959 provided in Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective an oft-cited definition of mass communication. Mass communication is "directed toward relatively large, heterogeneous, and anonymous audiences. The messages of mass communication "are transmitted publicly, often timed to reach most audience members simultaneously, and are transient in character." The mass communicator "tends to be, or to operate within, a complex organization that may involve great expense."[63]

– The transmission of culture and of norms through the mass media to maintain social organization. This construction also retains the notion of "mass" as a large quantity but deals with the cultural and social context of information in transit. This construction

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[62]*See* Charles Horton Cooley, Human Nature and Social Order (New York: Scribner's, 1902).

[63]Charles W. Wright, Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective (New York: Random House, 1959) 15.

stems from the foundations of sociology itself. Communication analysts from Harold Lasswell[64] to James W. Carey[65] have characterized mass communication as the transmission of culture as well as the linear transmission of data. John Dewey provided some philosophical underpinnings for the view of communication as the essence of society.[66] Writing in Democracy and Education in 1916, Dewey helped to provide a foundation for the development of the cultural studies construction of mass communication.[67]

> Society exists through a process of transmission of information quite as much as biological life. This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the older to the younger. Without this communication of ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, opinions, from these members of society who are passing out of the group life to those who are coming into it, social life could not survive. If the members who compose a society lived on continuously, they might educate the new-born members, but it would be a task directed by personal interest rather than social need. Now it is the work of necessity.[68]

– The subjugation of the individual or the maintenance of the status quo through mass media domination of communication and cultural channels. This construction employs the notion of "mass" as a collection of incoherent particles. Adherents of this construction, which include critical scholars, noted that "communication" actually is a misnomer because in the sense of sharing or exchange no such process exists in mass communication, which is one-way and hierarchical. Hans Magnus Enzensberger summarized this construction in The Consciousness Industry:

> The mind industry's main business and concern is not to sell its product; it is to 'sell' the existing order, to perpetuate the prevailing pattern of man's domination by

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[64]*See* Harold Lasswell, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society," The Communication of Ideas, ed. Lyman Bryson (New York: Harper, 1948) 36-53.

[65]James W. Carey 13-4.

[66]Dewey 2.

[67]James W. Carey 13-4.

[68]Dewey 3.

> man, no matter who runs the society, and by what means. Its main task is to expand and train our consciousness – in order to expand it.[69]

– The participation of individual members of the mass audience in a collective social or political process through their simultaneous but discrete reception of messages from an institutional source. This construction extends the notion of mass communication past the mere receipt of messages to establishing a "sharing" of messages and a "community" of media users. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach described this construction to open the fifth edition of their Theories of Mass Communication: "Our impressive ability today to send messages instantaneously across vast distances, and to arouse similar meanings in millions of people simultaneously, is so familiar to all of us that it is easy to regard it with nonchalance."[70] DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach also summarized the construction with their medium-system dependency theory:

> The organizational requirements of an increasingly complex society were less and less capable of being met with interpersonal communication alone. Over time, the system of mass communication filled the breach, becoming more and more necessary to the attainment of societal consensus, coordination of national political and economic activities, mobilization of the citizenry in times of threat or crisis, and other societal goals.[71]

Such a construction, that mass communication can be the basis of consensus through shared receipt of messages, has been the brunt of much criticism because of the implication of two-way or interactive participation in what essentially is a one-way process. Proposed for study are the development, evolution, and fate of this construction of mass communication and its role in policy-making and public discourse and an examination of competing constructions.

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[69]Hans Magnus Enzensberger, The Consciousness Industry: On Literature, Politics, and the Media (New York: Continuum, 1974) 10.

[70]DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 3.

[71]DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 325.

– The widespread dissemination or multiple reproduction of information beyond primary and secondary groups.

– The transmission of information from an institutional source to a large, anonymous audience through some mechanical or electronic process.

– The transmission of culture and of norms through the mass media to maintain social organization.

– The subjugation of the individual or the maintenance of the status quo through mass media domination of communication and cultural channels.

– The participation of individual members of the mass audience in a collective social or political process through their simultaneous but discrete reception of messages from an institutional source.

Figure 1-1. Constructions of mass communication

Methodology

The dissertation provides a philosophical foundation for the study of ideas as agents of social action from pragmatism and social construction theory. The dissertation presents the genealogy of the idea of participatory mass communication, derived from the social model of communication, and an examination of alternate constructions to test the usefulness of this framework. Historical analyses show the increased prominence of the idea of participatory mass communication in the 1920s and contributing social, economic, and political factors; the evolution of the idea with the successful development of television in the late 1940s and promotion, in the early 1970s, of cable television as a more "abundant" form of television, and challenges to the idea in the 1970s and 1980s with development of "interactive" alternatives, including two-way cable television and videotex systems that merged telephone and television systems.

Sources

Sources for the historical research include government records, public discourse in newspapers and magazines of the period under study, and academic debate on the social

role of mass communication and interactive communication technologies. Of specific interest is the ascendance of the participatory idea in the 1920s and critiques of that idea, supporting arguments for the cohesive role of television and their critiques, regulatory battles over the development of cable television, and the promotion of interactive alternatives to broadcasting. Central to the study of the role of mass communication in the 1920s are projections of the social role of radio broadcasting and the development of federal regulation of radio. Similarly, the development of cable television and conflicts over its regulation brought into focus the social roles of broadcasting and their strengths and weaknesses. Under investigation is the inclusion of the participatory idea of mass communication in these policy discussions.

Research Questions

Key elements of an evaluative framework for ideas as agents of social action are: what is the idea, what were its origins, and under conditions did it arise, how and under what conditions did it evolve, with what ideas was in competition, and what was its effectiveness? Such a framework provides opportunities to evaluate a social construction as one would evaluate a physical construction with an examination of its creation, its constituent parts, its purpose, its changes in use over time, its capacity to fulfill its purpose, and whether internal or external conditions influenced that performance. Of particular interest, in regard to non-physical constructions, are constructions in competition with the idea under study.

Specific research questions for the dissertation include:

– What were the theoretical, philosophical, and practical foundations for the idea of participatory mass communication?

– What was the purpose of the idea?

– Under what conditions did the idea gain currency?

– How did the idea change or evolve over time?

– What external conditions brought this change?

– What alternatives to the idea existed through time?

– What were the internal contradictions, if any, of the idea?

– What was the efficacy of the idea?

Plan of the Study

The dissertation includes a review of studies of the macrosocial roles of communication, development of a new theoretical framework for evaluation of mass communication policy-making, and a historical analysis of the development and evolution of the participatory idea of mass communication. Chapter 1 is the introduction to the dissertation and an examination of the intersection of theories of sociology and mass communication. Chapter 2 is an argument for a new theoretical framework for communication and mass communication and the philosophical foundations of that argument. Chapter 3 analyzes in more detail the social model of communication that is the basis of the participatory idea of communication and the economic model of communication that has served as the principal competitor of the social model in the United States. Chapter 4 shows how the participatory idea of mass communication gained prominence in the United States in the 1920s and alternatives to the idea. Chapter 5 traces the evolution of the participatory idea of mass communication through the 1970s with the development of television and cable television and challenges to that idea in the civil and political unrest of the era. Chapter 6 analyzes the technological challenges to the participatory idea of mass communications that began in the 1970s with two-way cable television and continued with the introduction of videotex systems that merged television and telephone technologies. Chapter 7 summarizes the findings of the research and evaluates the usefulness of a theoretical framework, with ideas as agents of social action, in light of the historical and policy analysis of the participatory idea of mass communication. Chapter 7 also

recommends adoption of an evaluative framework for communication that incorporates analyses of ideas as agents of social action.

Historical Review

The relationship of the study of communication and of sociology has been of interest since the founding of the field of sociology, and they have remained intertwined as the field of mass communication has developed. Sociologist Gabriel Tarde traced the development of journalism to the point that some traced the development of sociology: "The true advent of journalism, hence that of the public, dates from the (French) Revolution, which was one of the growing pains of the public..."[72] Marx earned a meager income as a newspaper correspondent. Robert Ezra Park, one of the leaders of the Chicago School of Sociology and a former newspaperman, indicated that the foundations of his empirical research were in his experience as a journalist.[73] Franklin H. Giddings, who led the sociology program at Columbia University, also was a former newspaperman.[74] Giddings continued his work in journalism through the 1920s.[75] The research of social psychologists Kurt Lewin and Carl Hovland was among the foundations of the social science of mass communication.[76]

Analysis of the macrosocial effects of mass communication requires a review of theories of both the fields of sociology and of mass communication and their intersection. Much of the quantitative research in mass communication has avoided larger social

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[72]Gabriel Tarde, Of Communication and Social Influence (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1969) 280.

[73]Robert Ezra Park, Race and Culture (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1950) viii-ix.

[74]Charles H. Page, Class and American Sociology (New York: Shocken, 1969) 145-46.

[75]Page 147.

[76]Wilbur Schramm, "Human Communication as a Field of Behavioral Science: Jack Hilgard and His Committee," Human Communication as a Field of Study, ed. Sarah Sanderson King. (Albany: SUNY P, 1989) 18.

questions because of theoretical and methodological restraints, resulting in criticism of that approach to mass communication research. Despite these restraints, the effects of mass communication, on a macrosocial and a microsocial level, remain of interest as the use of interactive or computer-mediated communication systems increases. Both the fields of sociology and of mass communication address the nature of human relationships.

Sociological Theory

Humans interact. That is the basic, and perhaps only, point of agreement among sociologists of various schools. Sociologists trace the history of the discipline at least to the work of Frenchman Auguste Comte, who coined the term "sociology" early in the nineteenth century. Comte noted the links that human interaction requires: "Interconnection in society has to exist."[77] The founding of "sociology" came in the aftermath of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. A number of forces were propelling Europe into a new era. Advances in the physical sciences, challenges to the rule of the church and monarchies, and the rise of capitalism all were creating a new European order. Human interaction for individual and mutual benefit became the focus of the work of Comte and his successors. The French sociologists owed a debt to their countrymen, Rousseau and Montesquieu,[78] to the German philosophers,[79] and to the British political economists[80] for their notions of social interaction of humans.

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[77]Auguste Comte, The Positive Philosophy, trans. Harriet Martineau (London: Bell, 1896) 128.

[78]Emile Durkheim, Montesquieu and Rousseau: Forerunners of Sociology (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1965) 155; Patrick Riley, The General Will Before Rousseau: The Transformation of the Divine into the Civic (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1986) 12.

[79]Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society, trans. George Simpson (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1947) 412.

[80]Durkheim, Division of Labor 36.

Sociology has been as diverse in its theory-building as in its origins. As sociologist Talcott Parsons noted in 1959, "We are told that there are as many systems of sociological theory as there are sociologists, that all is arbitrary and subjective."[81] Parsons, as sociologist Robert Merton, attempted to unify that theory. Sociological theorists have divided along the lines of the study of individual – microsocial – interactions or large-scale – macrosocial – relationships. Of interest at one level has been the patterns or structures of interaction and the effects of those structures on individuals or the role of individuals in those structures. Sociologists also have engaged in discourse about the nature of their ideas and their relationship to reality. Of increasing interest has been the perception of reality and the bias of its transmission. Seminal works of Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Georg Simmel have been the subject of analysis and re-analysis in attempts to bolster the theories of later schools of sociological thought. Later theorists have come to diametrically opposed readings of these classic works.[82] Of particular interest has been the role of Marx's theories in European and US schools of sociology and of Talcott Parsons in defining US sociological theory and specifically structural-functionalism, with its notion of organic interdependence. Critics of Parsons have contended that his readings of Durkheim and Weber were, at least, incomplete and, at worst, misleading.[83] Critics also questioned why Parsons further had omitted Marx from any substantive inclusion in his theory-building.[84]

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[81]Talcott Parsons, "Some Problems Confronting Sociology as a Profession," American Sociological Review 24 (1959): 547.

[82]*See* Stjepan G. Mestrovic, Durkheim and Postmodern Culture (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1992); Jeffrey C. Alexander, "The Centrality of the Classics," Social Theory Today, ed. Anthony Giddens and Jonathan H. Turner (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1987) 11-51.

[83]Mestrovic 28-9; Alexander 36.

[84]Alexander 38.

Although Parsons's structural-functionalism dominated the field in the United States for more than thirty years, competing theoretical schools have included Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory, George Homans's exchange theory, Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism as derived from George Herbert Mead, and Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology as derived from Edmund Husserl.[85] More recent theory building has involved feminism, postmodernism, and micro-macro integration.[86] Mass communication theory-building has been as diverse as that of sociology.

Mass Communication Theory

As communication theorists Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach noted in 1975: "No one has been sure at any given time, or can be sure at the present time, precisely what constitutes the study of mass communication."[87] Mass communication as an institution began with the "penny press" in New York in 1833, expanded with general-circulation magazines in the nineteenth century, and reached its zenith with motion pictures and broadcasting in the twentieth century. Origins of mass communication research are a matter of debate that reflects divisions within the field.

The different constructions of mass communication have provided competing schools for the study of mass communication in the United States. Journalism education, which provided training for newspaper reporters and editors, began in the United States in the nineteenth century, but study of mass communication, which included theoretical perspectives on mass media institutions and processes, did not begin until the mid-twentieth century. Some interested in the preparation of journalism practitioners have

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[85]Alexander 40.

[86]George Ritzer, Sociological Theory, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992) 562.

[87]Melvin L. DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach, Theories of Mass Communication, 3rd ed. (New York: McKay, 1975) ix.

derided mass communication as "communicology" and questioned its usefulness in production of newspapers or radio and television broadcasts.[88]

According to one tradition, mass communication research began in the United States in the 1920s, specifically as a result of concerns about the effects of propaganda during World War I. The founder of the mass communication field in the United States was Wilbur Schramm, who inaugurated centers of research and study at the University of Iowa, the University of Illinois, and Stanford University.[89] Schramm, whose own academic preparation was in English literature, identified four founding fathers of "mass communication" research: sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld, political scientist Harold Lasswell, and social psychologists Kurt Lewin and Carl Hovland.[90] Foundations of mass communication research, essentially quantitative research, were Lazarsfeld's market and voter research, Lasswell's propaganda analysis, and the social psychology studies of Lewin and Hovland. A recent analysis of the founding of the field contended that Schramm's work with these researchers during World War II set the stage for his efforts to establish mass communication as a quantitative research field.[91] Another recent analysis credits Lazarsfeld directly with the quantitative focus of the field.[92] Lazarsfeld published Radio and the Printed Page, an analysis of the radio audience, in 1940. Although newspapers and magazines went to subscribers and other readers who were unknown to the publishers, their circulation was not as pervasive as broadcasting messages, which

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[88]"Communicologists Seen as Threat to Journalism," Broadcasting 25 Mar. 1972: 70.

[89]Everett Rogers and Steven H. Chaffee, Communication and Journalism from "Daddy" Bleyer to Wilbur Schramm, Journalism Monographs 148 (Columbia, SC: AEJMC, 1994) 1.

[90]Wilbur Schramm, "Human Communication as a Field of Behavioral Science: Jack Hilgard and His Committee," Human Communication as a Field of Study, ed. Sarah Sanderson King (Albany: SUNY P, 1989) 13.

[91]Rogers and Chaffee 36.

[92]Everett Rogers, "On Early Mass Communication Study," Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media 36 (1992): 467.

could go to every person who was in proximity to a receiving device. The notion of an anonymous audience took on an entirely different meaning, certainly in its scope.[93] While the quantitative or social science school essentially was conducting research into the role and effects of mass communication as the purveyor of institutional messages to anonymous audiences, opposition was coming frob a number of fronts, representing various constructions. Another tradition traces mass communication research to the development around the turn of the century of journalism and speech departments whose principal responsibilities were training for communication vocations.[94] Willard G. Bleyer of the University of Wisconsin had represented the study of journalism as a vocation that essentially represented mass communication, if that term was in use, as the how-to of providing widespread dissemination of multiple reproductions.[95] Bleyer's struggle was to win a place in the academy for the study of journalism.[96] This school seems closely tied to the libertarian notion that newspapers and other news media provided the information necessary for citizens to make the best possible economic, social, and political decisions.[97]

Also in opposition to the quantitative school were the cultural studies and critical schools. The cultural studies school opted for a call for a much wider context for communications studies beyond the linear transmission of information. The cultural studies tradition traces the history of mass communication research in the United States to the work of Comte and through the Chicago School of Sociology, established at the

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[93]Rogers 468.

[94]Jesse Delia, "Communication Research: A History," Handbook of Communication Science, ed. Charles R. Berger and Steven H. Chaffee (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1987) 77.

[95]Rogers and Chaffee 12.

[96]Rogers and Chaffee 12.

[97]Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, Four Theories of the Press (Urbana, IL: U of Chicago P, 1956) 40.

University of Chicago in the 1920s. Chicago School researchers studied effects of urbanization and industrialization and developed theories of social disorganization, the idea that loss of common meanings within groups in a society may bring social disorder, and symbolic interaction, the notion that humans generally act toward social objects in terms of the meanings they attribute to the objects rather than their intrinsic character.[98]

The critical school endorsed the notion that mass communication was another means to exploit individuals through the hegemony of the dominant US political and economic institutions. This tradition traces mass communication research to the work of the Frankfurt School, founded in Germany in the 1930s and whose scholars came to the United States in 1933 to escape the Nazi regime. The Frankfurt School scholars established studies of communication from a Marxist tradition.[99]

Sociology and Communication

Sociologists, beginning with Comte, have acknowledged the role of communication, shared meanings or common meanings, in human interaction and in the foundations of community and society. Communication scholar Gadi Wolfsfeld in 1991 noted that mass communication researchers generally have avoided studies of social process because examination of the role of mass media in such processes has to grapple with theoretical and methodological problems of looking at interaction of groups and institutions. "The vast majority of research in communications is much more focused on

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[98]*See* George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1934); Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interaction: Perspective and Method (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969); Lewis A. Coser, Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt, 1977) 574.

[99]Jennifer Daryl Slack and Martin Allor, "The Political and Epistemological Constituents of Critical Communication Research," Journal of Communication 33.3 (1983): 209-10.

the individual levels of analysis."[100] Wolfsfeld also noted that causality poses a concern in such studies: "How can one establish for certain whether it is violence which attracts media coverage or the presence of media which instigates the violence? How can one develop and test a general theory about the role of the mass media when there are so many very different types of political conflicts?"[101]

Some compilers of mass communication theories, such as Warren J. Severin and James W. Tankard, Jr., generally have avoided the issue of social order. For Severin and Tankard the question of mass communication theory essentially is one of a transfer of information: "Communication theory is aimed at improving our understanding of the process of mass communication. With better understanding, we are in a better position to predict and control the outcomes of mass communication efforts."[102] Severin and Tankard addressed essentially the application of quantitative methods to mass communication research. They also acknowledged the limitations of such methods in regard to the physical sciences:

> Theories and research methods in the social sciences are not as accurate or refined as those used in the physical sciences. Understanding and predicting human behavior is extremely difficult; nevertheless, the imperfect statements that can be made about human behavior as a result of research are better than the guesswork upon which much of communication has been based.[103]

While mass communication researchers generally have opted to avoid the large social framework in their analysis of communication effects, several theorists, particularly Harold Lasswell, Charles R. Wright, DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, and Denis McQuail have attempted to establish a sociology of mass communication.

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[100]Gadi Wolfsfeld, Media, Protest, and Political Violence: A Transactional Analysis, Journalism Monographs 127 (Columbia, SC: AEJMC, 1991) 1.

[101]Wolfsfeld 1.

[102]Warren J. Severin and James W. Tankard, Communication Theories: Origins, Methods, and Uses in the Mass Media, 3rd ed. (White Plains: Longman, 1992) 4.

[103]Severin and Tankard 344.

Lasswell, who in 1946 defined a communication act as 'Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect,"[104] acknowledged "the degree to which communication is a feature of life at every level."[105] Lasswell used the metaphors of organism and equilibrium in his analysis of the structure and function of communication: "The single-celled organism or the many-membered group tends to maintain an internal equilibrium and to respond to changes in the environment in a way that maintains this equilibrium."[106] He identified three functions for communication: surveillance, correlation of the components of society in response to the environment, and transmission of culture.[107]

Charles R. Wright in 1959 provided Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective and indicated that the term "mass communication" essentially had become interchangeable with "mass media."[108] Wright did not extend his sociological perspective to issues of social organization or large-scale social effects. He indicated that mass communication is "a special kind of social communication involving distinctive characteristics of the audience, the communication experience, and the communicator."[109]

Perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of sociological theory and communication issues is the work of DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach in Theories of Mass Communication, first published in 1966. The medium-system dependency theory, which DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach proposed in 1989 in the fifth edition of their book, included five paradigms. The cognitive paradigm with its foundations in psychology principally dealt with individual

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[104]Lasswell 37.

[105]Lasswell 38

[106]Lasswell 38.

[107]Lasswell 51.

[108]Wright 6.

[109]Wright 7.

dependency,[110] and the symbolic-interactionist paradigm involves individual and group perceptions of the world "through fragile subjective understandings of reality."[111] Central to the study of social order were the structural-functionalist paradigm of organic interdependence,[112] the conflict paradigm of opposing forces,[113] and the evolutionary paradigm of adaptation through change.[114] All three of the latter paradigms involved maintenance of social balance. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach explained the growing importance of the mass media to maintaining such balance:

> The more complex American society became, the more such things changed. Most important were the limits of the interpersonal communication system that once made word-of-mouth variable. The organizational requirements of an increasingly complex society were less and less capable of being met with interpersonal communication alone. Over time, the system of mass communication filled the breach, becoming more and more necessary to the attainment of societal consensus, coordination of national political and economic activities, mobilization of the citizenry in times of threat or crisis, and other societal goals. In other words, the information resources of the media system became important and prized.[115]

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach acknowledged that mass communication or mass media may have divisive as well as cohesive effects in society. While mass communication is an indispensable component of the social structure, "mass communication may be dysfunctional, contributing to various forms of deviant behavior."[116]

Sociologist Denis McQuail in 1975 indicated that sociologists generally have avoided the study of communication because of the wide range of meanings for the

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[110]DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 311.

[111]DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 315.

[112]DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 319.

[113]DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 320.

[114]DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 322.

[115]DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 325.

[116]DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 32.

phenomenon: "As a topic, communication has been somewhat neglected in sociology, in part because of this diversity. All social interaction is necessarily communicative and any social process presumes a communication process."[117] McQuail indicated that the diversity of sociological research also has been a factor in the lack of sociological research into communication. He outlined some of these research schools and their approaches to communication study:

> Structural-functionalism and social-system thinking tends to focus on the patterns and outcomes of social processes rather than on the content and dynamics of the processes themselves. The radical, Marxist, or neo-Marxist sociology has also been mainly concerned with structural matters (at least in its Anglo-Saxon varieties). The phenomenological and ethno-methodological schools of sociology are in one respect concerned almost exclusively with communication, but only with limited aspects of it.[118]

Although McQuail indicated that a sociology founded upon a communication perspective would be "intellectually barren,"[119] he encouraged further sociological research into communication issues.

Communication and sociology theorists have acknowledged that development of computer-mediated communication may bring changes in communication and its social effects. Wright, in the third edition of Mass Communication in 1986, noted that some theorists were envisioning a new medium that would close the dichotomy between mass communication and interpersonal communication and might even result in the disappearance of mass communication "as we know it today."[120] DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach in 1989 characterized mass communication essentially as mass adoption of communication technologies. They indicated that from the structural-functionalist perspective those new technologies that promoted social order would become mass

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[117]Denis McQuail, Communication (London: Longman, 1975) 1.

[118]McQuail, Communication 203.

[119]McQuail, Communication 203.

[120]Charles W. Wright, Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective 3rd. ed. (New York: Random House, 1986) 27.

communication systems.[121] McQuail in 1975 had been less sure of substantive changes because of new technologies:

> The history of communication technology so far does not give us any reason to believe that the availability of a technology has a major determining effect on the social uses to which it will be put. In the short term, at least, the centralised public communication systems established by the mass media are too critical for the running of bureaucratic and highly organized societies to be dispensed with.[122]

By 1994, McQuail had acknowledged that new communication technologies may pose some threat to existing media institutions: "Although the 'new media' were, in their initial stages, taken up mainly as extensions of existing audiovisual media, they represent a challenge to the production, distribution, and basic forms of the latter."[123]

Intersection

Theories of mass communication and sociology provide no convenient intersection. Communication research poses a difficulty, as McQuail noted, because fundamental disagreements exist even as to the nature of communication and in particular the notion of mass communication: "Communication underlies all social activity and this universality makes it at the same time very familiar and yet difficult to encompass by any definition which is not so general as to be virtually empty of meaning or inadequate to represent the great diversity of communication."[124]

Mass communication, despite Wright's efforts to define the field, is alternately process, content, medium, and institution. Medium has definitions both as a milieu, an environment for the sustenance of an organism, and as an intermediary for transfer of

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[121]DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 350.

[122]McQuail, Communication 90.

[123]Denis McQuail, Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction, 3rd ed. (London: Sage, 1994) 21.

[124] McQuail, Communication 1.

information. Scholars have used both definitions in their approaches to the study of mass communication. Other scholars, including Carey and Lasswell, have contended that communication involves the transmission of culture as well as the transmission of data through various channels. Much mass communication research has dealt with the processes, technologies, and institutions involved in the transmission of information from one point to another. The "media" have come to mean the institutions that provide communications services. As Severin and Tankard indicated, the terms "mass communication," the process, and "mass media," the institutions themselves, are in use interchangeably. Sociologist Robert Blau noted that communication is essential to provide networks for social transactions, but the use of mass media affects the nature of social communication:

> Thus the mass media substitute for intercommunication a primarily one-sided transmission of messages from a communication center to a large audience that has little opportunity for feedback communication, as exemplified by newspaper readers and the rare occasions on which members of this group write letters to the editor.[125]

Jürgen Habermas traced the transition of the press from small, privately owned newspapers that resisted public interference to large, powerful, commercial institutions. Habermas contended that this transition had increased the range of the media but to the detriment of public interests: "Whereas formerly the press was able to limit itself to the transmission and amplification of the rational-critical debate of private people assembled into a public, now conversely this debate gets shaped by the mass media to begin with."[126] The foremost problem was that "mass communication" displayed few of the characteristics of interpersonal or point-to-point communication. McQuail indicated that the

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[125]Peter M. Blau, Exchange and Power in Social Life (New York: Wiley, 1964) 284.

[126]Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1989) 188.

difference "between mass communication and interpersonal communication is the interposition of a complex technology of a particular kind."[127] Interaction, in particular, was at a minimum. Mass media did not serve as intermediaries between persons in the sense of speech, writing, or even a telephone line. Movement of messages essentially was one-way between the institution and the receiver. Existence of the large, complex institutions that are mass media focused more attention on the institutions than on their role as communicators.

Those who choose Marxist filters for their theories often place institutions as their focal point. Critical approaches to communication research begin with assumptions that include the dominance of the capitalist system, its hegemonic or pervasive characteristics, and its inflexibility to change short of revolution and replacement of the entire system. Critical research tends to address media institutions, particularly in the context of hegemony, rather than the processes of communication. Communication technology often receives a characterization as ideology rather than as a neutral process.[128] Central to this view also is the contention that the mass media preserve the status quo. As McQuail noted, the mass communication process "is more likely to sustain rather than challenge the existing power structure of a society and it does not take a conspiracy theory to account for this. Mass communication process has become a major institution in industrialised societies."[129]

In mass communications research distinctions have to come as to whether the focus is the milieu, the content, the processes, the technologies, or the institutions. Similar distinctions have to come in studies of society. A fundamental issue of sociological theory-building has been whether attention should go to individual interactions or the dynamics of

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[127]McQuail, Communication 166.

[128]Slack and Allor 211.

[129]McQuail, Communication 194.

larger social structures in which the individual is an abstract component.[130] Theorists in sociology, as in other social sciences, have chosen different and often competing metaphors from biological and physical sciences to describe human conditions and relationships. Changes in theories in the biological and physical sciences have resulted in new approaches to social science constructs,[131] and theories from semiotics, linguistics, and literary criticism have joined them.[132] Mass communication scholars, in turn, have borrowed from the social sciences to develop their constructs of communication processes and effects.[133]

Scholarly constructs of the social sciences and of mass communication range from simple analogies with biological organisms to applications of theories of evolution, equilibrium, the time-space continuum, critical mass and of principals of uncertainty and complementarity.[134] Such theories can come directly or strained through the philosophical

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[130]Ritzer 528.

[131]*See* Patrick L. Baker, "Chaos, Order, and Sociological Theory," Sociological Inquiry 63 (1993): 123-49; Hal Gregersen and Lee Sailer, "Chaos Theory and Its Implication for Social Science Research," Human Relations 46 (1993): 777-802.

[132]*See* Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991); Arthur Asa Berger, Seeing Is Believing: An Introduction to Visual Communication (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1989); Noam Chomsky, Reflections on Language (New York: Pantheon, 1976; Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959).

[133]*See* Phillip J. Tichenor and Douglas M. McLeod, "The Logic of Social and Behavioral Science," Research Methods in Mass Communication, ed. Guido H. Stempel, Jr. and Bruce H. Westley, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1989) 10-29.

[134]*See* Gerald Marwell, The Critical Mass in Collective Action: A Micro-Social Theory (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993); Theodore L. Becker, ed., Quantum Politics: Applying Quantum Theory to Political Phenomena (New York: Praeger, 1991); Herbert Alexander Simon, Reason in Human Affairs (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1983); Cynthia Eagle Russett, The Concept of Equilibrium in American Social Thought (New Haven: Yale UP, 1966); Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, 1860-1915 (Philadelphia, U of Pennsylvania P, 1945).

filters of Hegel and Marx.[135] Other political filters that calcify economic and social institutions also exist.[136]

When sociologists DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach in 1989 expanded their theory of media dependency to media-system dependency, they opted for a paradigm of paradigms. Despite the various approaches of the cognitive, structural-functionalist, conflict, symbolic-interactionist, and evolutionary paradigms they used, medium-system dependency theory included basic organic and equilibrium characteristics. Media use allows individuals, groups, and society as a whole to maintain equilibrium. Without an assumption of the need for equilibrium, dependency on media would not be necessary.

Notions such as equilibrium and social order are value-laden. Sociologist Gunnar Myrdal in his 1944 study, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy, noted the arbitrariness of such terms. "This valuation is certainly not under all conditions self-evident from the viewpoint of every party involved." Myrdal noted that preservation of social order may not be desirable, and in particular: "In the Negro problem practically every situation, except where a race riot is on, can be, and is often in the literature, described as an 'accommodation,' and status quo in every aspect can thus be, and is, implicitly justified because it preserves cooperation and the social order."[137] Despite such criticism, theorists have focused on the role of communication in preserving social order.

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[135]*See* Hanno Hardt, "The Return of the 'Critical' and the Challenge of Radical Dissent: Critical Theory, Cultural Studies, and American Mass Communication Research." Communication Yearbook 12 (1989): 558-600; Slack and Allor 208-18.

[136]*See* James R. Beniger, The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1986); Gary S. Becker, The Economic Approach to Human Behavior (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1976).

[137]Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (New York: Harper, 1944) 1055.

Communication and Society

What is communication? What is society? What is the relationship, if any, between communication and society? Answers to these questions are the starting points for communication and sociology research, and selections of answers may pose fundamental bias problems as the research proceeds. Alternate answers may provide entirely different research thrusts and different biases. As sociologist Anthony Giddens noted, social structures, unlike natural structures, are man-made and reactive to efforts to frame and organize them.[138] No detached point for observation and analysis of communication processes or their social effects seems available. At best, a researcher may construct evaluative models and test their usefulness.

A fundamental disagreement exists even as to the nature of communication. Similar distinctions have come in studies of society. Mass communication scholars as scholars in the social sciences have chosen different and often competing analogies from biological and physical sciences to describe human conditions and relationships. Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach acknowledged in the development of their inclusive theory of medium-system dependency the difference between harmony, peaceful accord, and equilibrium, the balance of opposing equal forces.[139]

Critical approaches to communication research, such as those of the Frankfurt School, begin with assumptions that include the dominance of the capitalist system, its hegemonic characteristics, and its inflexibility to change short of revolution or replacement of the entire system.[140] Critical research tends to address media institutions, particularly

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[138]Anthony Giddens, New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies (New York: Basic Books, 1976) 162.

[139]*See* Melvin L. DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach, Theories of Mass Communication 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 1989).

[140]*See* Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

in the context of hegemony, rather than the processes of communication. Technology often receives a characterization as an extension of ideology rather than as a neutral process.

Cultural studies include a mixture of critical and pragmatic perspectives. A basic tenet of cultural studies is that isolation of communication from other cultural factors is inappropriate. Isolation of communication processes or effects from the full cultural context provides an incomplete perspective.[141] Critical researchers, including cultural studies scholars, question the use of quantitative methods in communication research. While reduction of individual actions to statistics may be inappropriate, quantitative methods, uses of surveys and experiments, for example, further reduce the context for communication factors. Quantitative researchers question the empirical foundations of qualitative and critical research. Sociologist Robert Merton in Social Theory and Social Structure in 1949 noted the shortcomings of both approaches. Merton compared the sociology of knowledge of European researchers and the sociology of mass communication of US researchers: "And gradually, the loose impression emerges which can be baldly and too simply summarized thus: the American knows what he is talking about, and that is not much; the European knows not what he is talking about, and that is a great deal."[142]

Amid all these contentions, a communication researcher has to choose some path. Of particular interest in this regard is the study of communication processes and their relationship to social order. These communication studies have reflected not only the nature of such relationships but also the communication research biases at the time that researchers conducted their studies. Analysis of the effects of computer-mediated

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[141]James W. Carey "The Origins of the Radical Discourse on Cultural Studies in the United States," Journal of Communication 33.3 (1983): 311-13.

[142]Merton 202.

communication requires use of a framework that minimizes if not eliminates biases of existing approaches to communications research.

A theoretical framework with ideas as agents of social action allows a pluralism of perspectives that may not be available in other approaches. This model allows the analysis of ideas as agents of social action but does not require allegiance to any one idea or system of goals. Such an approach maintains the role of inquiry without reifying theory or abandoning humanitarian goals. As William James noted in an essay, "A Certain Blindness in Human Beings," pragmatism provides a multiple vantage-point of the world. James wrote that: "The facts and works of life need many cognizers to take them in. There is no point of view absolutely public and universal..."[143] A theoretical framework of ideas as agents of social action provides similar advantages in a post-modern environment in which communication is both the negotiation of reality and the currency of ideas. The next chapter is an examination of the theoretical foundations of ideas as agents of social action.

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[143] Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1948) 266.

CHAPTER 2
IDEAS AS AGENTS OF SOCIAL ACTION

Introduction

Humans would be much easier subjects of analysis and investigation if their minds did not separate them from the physical universe and if ideas, the products of those minds, did not help shape humans' understanding of the physical universe and guide their actions in it. If humans simply were part of the physical environment, their actions could fall into patterns of behavior similar to that of other social animals. As producers of ideas, humans act and react on the basis of those ideas, which may have limited or indirect relationships to the existence of a physical universe. Differences of opinion on the roles of the mind and of ideas in human actions divide those who investigate and analyze the human condition in the physical universe.[1]

These differences have become clearer with the apparent transition from a modern to post-modern era[2] in which ideas hold some primacy and some detachment from notions of a fixed, objective, physical reality. The primacy of ideas in a post-modern era makes

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[1]*See* Jon Elster, The Cement of Society: A Study of Social Order (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989); Karl Popper and John Eccles, The Self and Its Brain (New York: Springer International, 1977); George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist (Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1934).

[2]*See* Marshall Berman, All That Is Solid Melts Into Air (New York: Simon, 1982); Richard Bernstein, The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity-Postmodernity (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1992); James W. Carey, "The Mass Media and Democracy: Between the Modern and the Postmodern," Journal of International Affairs 47 (1992): 1-21; Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993).

necessary a new evaluative framework to analyze the role of ideas as agents of social action.[3] Agent, in this sense, denotes something that is capable of producing an effect rather than one who acts or has power to act.[4] Development of such a framework requires analyses of the transition from the modern era to the post-modern era, the historical approaches to analysis of relationships between ideas and reality, and an inclusive theory for these relationships. Proposed is a theory that includes both the relationship between physical reality and ideas and communication as the currency of ideas. In an age of ideas and information, communication, this theory argues, may take on the central role in intellectual life that science has occupied in the modern era and religion occupied in the pre-modern era.

Also proposed is that ideas serve as agents of social action, essentially as tools to achieve social goals. This contention differs somewhat from the standard notion of ideology as a tool of domination or exploitation with the use of artifice to disguise true intentions of those who dominate or exploit.[5] The contention of ideas as agents of social action does not assume or presume the value of the goals of those who use these tools. As physical tools or constructions, these ideas exist to meet ends, whose moral or societal benefits also may be matters of contention. Perhaps one even could modify the tool-like tone of the pro-gun slogan: "Ideas don't kill people; people kill people." Subject to analysis is the origin of an idea as an agent of social action, its evolution or changes, its effectiveness, and factors in its demise, if that has occurred.

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[3]*See* Alain Touraine, Return of the Actor: Social Theory in Postindustrial Society, trans. Myrna Godzich (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1988).

[4]Stuart Berg Flexner, ed., The Random House College Dictionary (New York: Random House, 1973) 25.

[5]*See* John B. Thompson, Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication (Cambridge: Polity, 1990).

This contention borrows from Marxism,[6] pragmatism,[7] and social construction theory[8] the view that ideas are the product of human action and expands that view to argue that changes in and destructive factors for ideas also are the result of human action. At odds with this view are the scientism that reduces all human activity to the predictable patterns of the physical universe[9] and the idealism that establishes ideas as intellectual manifestations separate from human activity.[10] Ideas as agents of social action and as products of social action offer an intersection for idealism and scientism.

Ideas as agents of social action also allow for the possibility of competing "realities." While scientism argues for a fixed and objective reality and phenomenology argues for the subjective reality of each individual, ideas as agents of social action allow both for the intersubjectivity of scientism and the negotiation of reality of symbolic interaction[11] or communicative action.[12] The contention of ideas as agents of social action does not preclude other agents of social action whether external from the physical universe or internal from the individual mind or body.

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[6]*See* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964).

[7]*See* William James, Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (New York: Longmans, 1980).

[8]*See* Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Anchor, 1966); John R. Searle, The Construction of Social Reality (New York: Free Press, 1995).

[9]*See* Tom Sorrell, Scientism: Philosophy and the Infatuation with Science (London: Routledge, 1991).

[10]*See* William Caldwell, Pragmatism and Idealism (London: Black, 1913); Josiah Royce, Lectures on Modern Idealism (New Haven: Yale UP, 1919).

[11]*See* George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1934); Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interaction: Perspective and Method (Englewood Cliffs, CA: Prentice-Hall, 1969).

[12]*See* Jürgen Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Bacon Press, 1981).

Nature, Machine, and Idea

The nature of ideas and their relationship to the physical universe long has been the subject of intellectual curiosity, analysis, and debate. Despite some aversion to linear time and processes, many scholarly analyses have dealt with three phases of human life. The middle and baseline phase has been the modern phase, the industrial phase, or the scientific phase. What preceded this phase? Characterizations have included the pre-modern phase and the pre-industrial phase. What phase has succeeded that phase? Characterizations have included the post-industrial phase,[13] the post-modern phase,[14] and the poststructural phase.[15] Although the latter two phases have succeeded the initial phase, scholars in these phases have tried, in retrospect, to redefine the first phase in their own contexts or to use the first phase to redefine their phases.

Other possible divisions for these phases, whose historical junctures also are a matter of contention, include these primary signifiers: nature, machine, and idea. The pre-modern era was nature-dominated. Humans or their evolutionary predecessors simply were part of the physical universe. At some, still unknown point, humans developed self-awareness and with that awareness the capacity for objective action and subjective thought. With that capacity, humans began to develop tools and social structures. The pre-industrial phase included the natural years of hunting and gathering, agriculture, and processing of natural resources. Social structures were family-based or tribal. Religion dominated intellectual life such as it was. Political organization was family, tribal, and religious.

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[13]*See* Daniel Bell, The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

[14]*See* Allen Borgman, Crossing the Postmodern Divide (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992); Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993).

[15]*See* Jean Baudrillard, For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign, trans. Charles Levin (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1981).

Barter, trade, and early mercantilism predated complex financial transactions. Individualism may have had some meaning in a limited context.

The modern era has been machine-dominated. With combinations of tools and energy resources, machines literally began to dominate human life. That domination included not only the use of machines in the development of industry but also the inculcation of the mechanical into explanations of nature and human interaction. The Newtonian view of the universe as a machine helped to boost science. Division of labor provided a mechanical means to organize human activities. Industry involved advances in processing of raw materials and manufacturing. Social organization and political organization expanded into the notions of society and the nation-state. Science flourished and supplanted religion in intellectual life. Rationalism neatly separated humans' minds from their physical condition and their physical universe. Mercantilism advanced and grew into finance and economics. Individualism flourished as libertarianism supplanted theocracy and monarchy.[16]

Despite the dominance of mechanical thought, some modern thinkers attempted to provide a natural or biological explanation for human interaction, with such notions as social organization and social Darwinism.[17] The danger of the theory of evolution, for some, was that it reinforced the notion of natural man.[18] Man and his universe again were indistinct. Evolution, however, also contributed to the advancement of science as linear process, particularly one of progress. At the end of a Darwinian evolution of natural

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16*See* Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society, trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Knopf, 1964); Lewis Mumford, The Myth of the Machine: Technics and Human Development, vol. 1 (New York: Harcourt, 1967); Frederick Ferre, Philosophy of Technology (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice, 1988).

17*See* Greta Jones, Social Darwinism and English Thought: The Interaction Between Biological and Social Theory (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980).

18*See* Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, 1860-1915 (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1945).

selection would be the best and the brightest humans.[19] At the end of a Marxist revolution would be the restored "communism" or community of man.[20] Scholars of the post-modern phase have rebelled against the linear notion of rational thought that the theory of evolution helped to promote.[21]

The post-modern era has brought domination of the idea. As the scientists before them, post-modern thinkers have tried to recast the natural universe, but as a system of ideas, not as the machine of the scientists. Ideas and their importance obviously did not begin in the post-modern era. The idealism of the modern era and its esoteric properties paled before the domination of science until the latter part of the nineteenth century when Marxism and pragmatism found a bridge between the physical universe and ideas. Also at this time, however, interest arose in the subjective universe of the individual mind and the limited capacity for the individual to know the physical reality of the universe.[22] Science even added to the diminution of the mechanical universe in the early twentieth century with the theory of relativity and the principle of uncertainty.[23] Measurement of objective reality had its subjective limits. The post-modern or post-industrial phase also represents the ascendancy of ideas in economic processes as information becomes a commodity.[24]

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[19]*See* William F. Fine, Progressive Evolution and American Sociology, 1890-1920 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1979).

[20]*See* Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, trans. Martin Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964).

[21]*See* Marimba Ani, Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1994).

[22]*See* William James, Principles of Psychology (New York: 1890).

[23]*See* H. A. Lorentz, Albert Einstein, Hermann Minkowski, and Hermann Weyl, The Principle of Relativity: A Collection of Original Memoirs on the Special and General Theory of Relativity (New York: Dover, 1923); Werner Heisenberg, Physics and Beyond (New York: Harper, 1971).

[24]James W. Chesebro and Donald G. Bonsall, Computer-Mediated Communication: Human Relationships in a Computerized World (Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1989) 20-23.

Social organization and political organization are in a state of flux. Individualism remains in contention with collectivism despite the failure of Soviet communism. Science faces challenges from other idea-based systems, and communication, particularly the study of language, has gained intellectual prominence.[25] Much post-modern thought has focused on language as the representation of reality.[26] Language to some post-modern thinkers is reality, such as it exists.[27]

The Currency of Ideas

If the hallmark of intellectual life in the pre-modern phase was religion and the hallmark of intellectual life in the modern phase was science, then the hallmark of intellectual life in the post-modern phase may be communication as the currency of ideas. Communication serves as the medium for intellectual exchange and the site for the negotiation of reality. Explanations of communication have paralleled these characteristic phases of human life: nature, machine, and idea. The modern view of pre-modern communication has been that of a natural condition. Various modern thinkers including Ferdinand Tonnies, Max Weber, and Karl Marx have described a condition of empathy and unity, almost Edenic in nature. Those who criticize the excesses of the modern era depict

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[25]*See* Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method (Berkeley: U of California P, 1966); Peter Hylton Russell, Idealism and the Emergence of Analytic Philosophy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

[26]*See* Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw, 1966); Noam Chomsky, Reflections on Language (New York: Pantheon, 1975.

[27]*See* Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1994).

pre-modern humans as being in total harmony with themselves and their universe.[28] The modern view of communication has been mechanical.[29] Communication is a process of transfer, either of individual messages or of culture. Communication and its content became neatly separate.[30] In the post-modern phase, communication would serve as the site for the negotiation of reality amid competing constructions.

Communication involves the construction and projection of messages and the perception and reconstruction of those messages on the basis of the recipient's acculturation and world-view. As with perceptions and reconstructions of physical reality, a difference or gap exists between the constructed message and the recipient's reconstruction of that message because of sensory limitations and socially directed influences on reconstruction. The television news report or the newspaper article may elicit diverse reactions on the basis of the perspectives of individual audience members. Even individual words may result in varied and contradictory interpretations from audience members.

Because of that gap, between physical reality and its reconstruction or between construction and reconstruction of messages, ideas essentially may take on existences of their own. Similarly, objectification of these ideas further removes them from their physical foundations. While an exercise is possible to uncover the foundations of these ideas, such an exercise may have no effect on the relationship between idea and action since the actor may have no knowledge of the gap and the physical or social foundations of the ideas.

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[28]*See* Ferdinand Tonnies, Community and Society, trans. Charles P. Loomis (East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 1957); Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Vintage, 1973).

[29]*See* Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, The Mathematical Theory of Communication (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1949).

[30]*See* James W. Carey, Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988).

Jürgen Habermas, with his theory of communicative action, has offered a bridge between modern and post-modern notions of communication. Communication remains a process in the theory of communicative action but a process for the negotiation of reality between or among individuals with subjective realities. Post-modern critics of the theory of communicative action have disparaged its links to rationality, scientism, and the notion of a fixed, physical reality.[31]

Reality Ain't What It Used To Be

Scholars, during the course of the past few decades have marked the demise of God, ideology, and history and movement past modernity, industrialism, and structuralism.[32] For some, the time has come to write a requiem for reality. The new age is post-real or perhaps, in the vernacular of another generation, "unreal." In past eras, scientists and philosophers have taken great stock in reality. In the post-real world, all seemingly is, at best, illusion. Form supplants substance. Image is an ideal.[33]

Why is reality so important? In the physical realm, reality may be a little easier to comprehend even if its measurement is now an issue of contention.[34] Undermining "fixed," "objective" reality have been notions of uncertainty and relativity in qualifying the measurement of the physical universe. Uncertainty introduces subjectivity into the

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[31]*See* John B. Thompson and David Held, ed., Habermas: Critical Debates (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1982); Richard J. Bernstein, ed., Habermas and Modernity (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1985)

[32]*See* Jean François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, 9th ed., trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993); Frances Fukuyama, The End of History and the Last Man (New York: Free Press, 1992); Jean Baudrillard, For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign, trans. Charles Levin (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1981); Thomas J. J. Altizer and William Hamilton, Radical Theology and the Death of God (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966); Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology (New York: Free Press, 1960).

[33]Daniel Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America (New York: Harper, 1964).

[34]Hillary Putnam, Reality with a Human Face (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1990) 4-11.

objective measurement of the physical universe, and relativity removes the fixed locus for the disinterested scientific observers. Deconstruction, from its foundations of literary analysis, similarly has separated texts from any historical or philosophical groundings.[35] Phenomenology has located reality in every individual's mind.

Does reality even apply to ideas? When is an idea real? If one links reality with truth, then what is not real is not true. How does one measure what is real, but not true? If an idea exists, then is it not inherently real? Does it matter whether the idea is true if the idea is held and has effect? Perhaps not, if ideas successfully detach from their physical foundations. Even if ideas have practical origins, are those origins inherently part of the ideas? Max Weber identified the religious foundations of the "spirit of capitalism," but those who encountered the "spirit of capitalism" had no inherent understanding of its relationship to the Protestant ethic.[36] Ideas require action on their own terms.

Another post-modern question is whether humans even have the ability to perceive and reconstruct reality adequately. In earlier eras, ideas may have been the province of the elite and the intelligentsia. As information becomes a commodity, persons on all social and economic levels are going to have the opportunity to process and manipulate that information. New technologies allow participation in "virtual" reality, a computer simulation of a reality. Will such experiences raise popular interest in the nature of the constructed realities in which individuals now live and act? Are individuals and existing social and political institutions ready to deal with multiple and competing realities? Challenges to assumptions about constructions of race, sex, sexual orientation, and class already are under way as are challenges to science and rationality. These are substantive and compelling challenges in the post-modern world. Does science with its fixed,

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[35]Hugh J. Silverman and Don Ihde, ed., Hermeneutics and Deconstruction (Albany: SUNY P, 1985).

[36]Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Scribner, 1959).

objective reality provide the means to deal with these new challenges? Does idealism, in its post-modern formulation, even want to address these challenges?

Historical Thrusts

A fixed, objective reality of the physical universe may co-exist with the multiple, subjective realities of individual minds, but in an "information age," which realities will come into play for human action? Of central interest is the nature of reality and of the reality of ideas. How do ideas arise? What is their relationship to physical reality? How do they affect action?

If one attempts to follow the historical and intellectual lines of such analysis of the reality of ideas, they include the following:

– Through empirical means, observation and experimentation, summary descriptions and explanations of the physical universe are possible and may have predictive capabilities. The physical universe constitutes reality. Ideas are only valid to the extent that they are confirmed by empirical evidence. This essentially is the scientific or rational model that remains dominant in Western culture.[37]

– The physical universe constitutes one component of a dual reality that also includes mental activity and its products, ideas. Ideas are at some level higher of intellectual importance than practical action.[38] Although this model generally represents idealism, post-modernism also would accept the detachment of the physical universe and ideas, if not the hierarchy.[39]

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[37]*See* Daniel Little, Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); David Braybrooke, Philosophy of Social Science (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice, 1987); Karl Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery (London: Hutchinson, 1959).

[38]*See* Franz Gabriel Nauen, Revolution, Idealism and Human Freedom: Schelling, Holderlin, and Hegel and the Crisis of Early German Idealism (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971).

[39]Lyotard 53-60.

– The physical universe constitutes reality, but each individual possesses a subjective reality because of the limitations of the senses and the ability of the mind to reconstruct physical reality through perception and cognitive processing. Because of these limitations, an objective knowledge of the physical universe is not fully possible. This model describes phenomenology.[40] At the extreme, phenomenology argues against even the existence of a physical universe. Such solipsism argues only for existence of the human self and its subjective reality.

– The physical universe exists and constitutes a reality, but the basis of human knowledge of reality is negotiation between or among the subjective realities of individuals.[41] This model includes symbolic interactionism and the theory of communicative action and is an outgrowth of phenomenology.

– The realities of the physical universe and of ideas exist on a dual basis, but ideas are the product of activities in the physical universe. Ideas have no foundations other than their physical origins, but the physical, practical, or historical origins of ideas may not be clear to those, across generations, who come in contact with the ideas. Foundations of this line include Marxism, pragmatism, and social construction theory. The Marxist line also provides that ideas or, more specifically ideology, mask the characteristics of domination and exploitation of social and political relationships.[42]

These historical thrusts represent the foundations for methodologies, world-views, and political arguments. To adopt one such world-view may be to preclude acceptance of

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[40]*See* Alfred Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1967); Edmund Husserl, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1970)

[41]*See* Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969).

[42]*See* John B. Thompson, Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication (Cambridge: Polity, 1990).

another world-view. Even the existence of the various world-views provides realities in conflict.

Scientism – Ideas are only valid to the extent that they are confirmed by empirical evidence.

Idealism – Ideas are at some level of higher intellectual importance than practical action.

Phenomenology – Each individual possesses a subjective reality because of the limitations of the senses and the ability of the mind to reconstruct physical reality through perception and cognitive processing.

Communicative Action – The basis of human knowledge of reality is negotiation between or among the subjective realities of individuals.

Social Construction – Ideas are the product of activities in the physical universe, but the physical, practical, or historical origins of ideas may not be clear to those, across generations, who come in contact with the ideas.

Figure 2-1. Models of reality.

Realities in Conflict

Basic assumptions of these historical thrusts are that humans exist, think, and interact. Any elaboration beyond these points generally requires some allegiance to a particular line of thought. Realism and idealism each provide an absolute. With realism only a fixed reality is available. With idealism, in a post-modern sense, no fixed reality is available. Some bridge should exist between the world of substance and the world of illusion. Debates about methodology have centered on the correlation between knowledge and reality. Science essentially is the testing of ideas through physical evidence obtained through sensory capacities. Vision, hearing, and touching and, to a lesser extent, smell and taste provide the tools for validation. In their arguments against quantitative methods, critical and some qualitative researchers argue that the methods of science place too great a

distance between the scientist and the reality of everyday life.[43] Quantitative analysis transforms living beings into abstract numbers, and experiments study human behavior in an artificial environment. The issues of reflexivity and uncertainty are of equal concern. How can the subjective ideas and objective actions of the researcher not affect and help determine the outcome of their research?[44]

Even for post-modern thinkers, physical reality is a point of interest. Reality of an everyday world has even taken on some of the aggrandizement of the empathetic construction of the natural, pre-modern world, the oft-noted but never located "village," where humans lived in harmony, at least with themselves if not with their surroundings. Post-modern writings are replete with discussions of life world, real life, and everyday life.[45] Methodological problems exist in assessing or interacting with this everyday world without tarnishing real life with subjective ideas or objective action.

For modern and post-modern thinkers, interest in "reality" also seems to involve a pre-modern world or condition that shows no effects of science, society, culture, or mass media. Of keen interest has been "natural" man and woman stripped of all trappings of civilization and acculturation.[46] Alternative constructions have included the individual in the midst of basic survival and constantly on the verge of anarchy, except for social

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[43]*See* Jennifer Daryl Slack and Martin Allor, "The Political and Epistemological Constituents of Critical Communication Research," Journal of Communication 33.3 (1983): 208-18.

[44]*See* Anthony Giddens, New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies (New York: Basic Books, 1976)

[45]*See* Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959); Jürgen Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Bacon Press, 1981); Philomena Essed, Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1991); Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1994).

[46]*See* Pierre Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity, 1990).

constraints in place, and the individual in the midst of some community of empathy until ambition, technology, or objectification disrupted the harmony.

At issue even have been the reality of the individual and the reality of society. Is the individual a product of society or is society a product of individual interaction? George Herbert Mead, for one, argued that the individual does not exist without a social context.[47] Jon Elster contends that only actions of individuals are possible and not actions of societies.[48] The dominant view in the United States has been of the rational individual who has the ability to collect and process the necessary information to make the best possible social, political, and economic decisions.

Thanks to Sigmund Freud, the irrationality of man has received some currency.[49] All decisions are not rational. At issue has been the primacy of rationality. To promote rationality is not necessarily to deny the other characteristics of the human but to endorse the normative quality of rationality. Physical reality may provide some standard against which to measure other realities, but in daily decision-making that comparison may not be necessary or possible. Religion offers a case study for examination. People hold religious beliefs despite the lack of empirical evidence. What empirical evidence may exist, in the Gospels for example, is the subject of contradictory analysis. The argument against a measurable universe is that at the quantum level, objective measurement has its limits. The argument against an empirical knowledge of the universe is that human senses are inadequate to convey fully the reality of a physical universe.

Also of interest has been humans' view of themselves in some reality of the physical universe. One can trace the self-images of humans through phases that include

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[47]*See* George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1934).

[48]*See* Jon Elster, The Cement of Society: The Study of Social Order (New York: Cambridge UP, 1991).

[49]*See* Sigmund Freud, The Ego and the Id, trans. Joan Riviere (New York: Norton, 1962).

self-awareness, heliocentrism, rationalism, evolution, the subconscious, relativity and uncertainty, and chaos. Science, in the modern era, generally has provided the metaphors for descriptions and explanations of the human condition and human interaction. The starting point of self-awareness is an assumption. No one knows when a human placed himself or herself as separate from the physical universe. Heliocentrism, the contribution of astronomy, diminished humans' place as the center of the universe. Rationalism confirmed humans' ability to reason and their objective distance from the rest of the universe. Evolution, a contribution of biology and geology, placed man back into the animal kingdom and into the physical universe. The identification of the subconscious confirmed humans' ability to make decisions without rationality and qualified the directness of the processes of perception and cognitive process. Relativity and uncertainty, the contributions of physics, confirmed the possibility of a pluralistic universe or at least one where measurement of objective reality had qualifications. Chaos theory, which purports that small causes may result in major systemic effects, also is challenging the notion of the mechanical universe or perhaps redesigning the machine.[50] Still at issue, however, is the existence of the physical universe and humans' understanding of the physical universe.

How effective is science in dealing with the products of the mind, which may not be rational or even in the same time frame as science? Freud provided at least one useful clarification with the notion of the subconscious. Human perception and cognitive processing of those perceptions are not always timely or direct. A zone of indirect sensory impressions exists along with the direct sensory zone. The mind does not receive those perceptions in an orderly or timely fashion, and the subsequent reconstructions may be indistinct, unclear, or puzzling to the individual. They may emerge in dreams, daydreams, or repressed memories. Such contentions should only reaffirm the view that the process of

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[50]*See* Patrick Baker, "Chaos, Order, and Sociological Theory," Sociological Inquiry 63 (1993): 123-49.

perception and reconstruction are not always linear with the processes of construction and projection.

Despite the transition to a post-modern phase, the physical foundations of science continue to hold sway against an abstract swirl of ideas. In a practical and scientific world, ideas are only as good as the physical evidence to substantiate them. Pragmatism would seem best to address that concern with the contention that ideas have their foundations in practical action. Even if one were to argue for a fixed reality, then the question arises about human perception and reconstruction. Is there a gap between physical reality and human knowledge of physical reality? Hillary Putnam has contended that philosophy, in the twentieth century, deserves a respite from this question, but Putnam also defends the contention that "philosophy is construction and not description of things-in-themselves."[51]

In the post-modern world, ideas have their own reality. An idea is real if it exists and has effects. No physical foundation is necessary. If the basis of human activity is the incomplete reconstruction of reality, then the basis of human action is not reality. Reality is merely a stimulus or catalyst for mental impressions. The value of science, says Karl Popper, is not in its absolute depiction of reality but rather in its relative value of intellectual constraints.[52] Science provides safeguards for validity claims. Intersubjectivity, at least, allows some common understanding, some negotiation of assumptions. Replication and peer review of research are safeguards about fraud as science is a safeguard against superstition and irrationality.[53] Can science provide full analysis of mental or social constructions? Science is the study of the physical universe. What about the non-physical

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[51]Putnam 52-3.

[52]Karl R. Popper, A World of Propensities (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1990); *see also* Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1970).

[53]*See* Earl Babbie, The Practice of Social Research, 6th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1992).

universe? Are ideas part of a matter-energy continuum? Does thought determine actions, behavior, and even somatic conditions?

Ideas as Agents of Social Action

If science and post-modernism are at odds, then ideas as products and agents of social action may provide some convenient intersection. What is the basis of man's action? Competing for this claim are divine or supernatural intervention, instinct, reason, hegemonic manipulation, and a sense of community or balance. No one factor may be enough. Humans have the ability to reason. Humans retain some vestiges of animal instincts. Karl Marx in his portrayal of *homo faber* would seem to have minimized humans more than the capitalist exploiters against whom he was railing.[54] Man solely was a producer. All human ideas were the result of that production and the need of individuals to be productive. Arrayed against the Marxist class system was the libertarian's rational individual. Portrayal of rational man seems more normative than prescriptive. Humans act out of self-interest. That conclusion raised new questions about how humans know what is in their best interest. That knowledge would seem to depend on a socialization process.[55]

Options for goal-setting have included individual benefit, hierarchy, and consensus. A strict utilitarian view would be that every individual would do what is in his or her best interest. Any common good would be an aggregate of the individual goods. An alternative is the common good or collective good. Collective good may depend on who establishes the good. In a hierarchical approach, the collective good is top down. In consensus, individuals voluntarily negotiate their individual needs for the good of all who participate.

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[54]Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964) 39-41.

[55]*See* Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949).

Although utilitarianism falls into disfavor with those who criticize the crassness of an economic metaphor for human behavior,[56] analysis of human action falls to issues of goals, means to goals, and the effectiveness of those means. Who benefits and who suffers or even, in the case of the world and universe, what benefits and what suffers? If interest is not present in goals and means, then is no intellectual investigation possible? Although some scholars might qualify their methodology as value-free, the pursuit of knowledge is itself a goal and often accompanying that aim is a goal of progress. Acknowledgment of those interests and assumptions is a necessary and a simple exercise to foster legitimacy.

Even if such goals are hidden assumptions, they also represent ideas. Means to goals also can be ideas. Are ideas real? From a sensory perspective, ideas are not real. One cannot see an idea, hear an idea, taste an idea, smell an idea, or feel an idea except in its symbolic representation or in its effects. Do ideas have effects? Do ideas affect human behavior?

Ideology carries negative connotations of domination and artifice to masquerade domination. Karl Mannheim in his study of ideology attempted to move past that negative connotation,[57] and Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann effectively promoted the notion of the social construction of reality.[58] US pragmatism, as Marxism, also had countered idealism with the stance that ideas have their origins in practice.[59] Borrowing both from social construction of reality and pragmatism, this dissertation posits that ideas are tools of

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[56]*See* Jane J. Mansbridge, ed., Beyond Self-Interest (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990),

[57]Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, 1936).

[58]Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Anchor, 1966).

[59]*See* William James, Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (New York: Longmans, 1980).

social action. Ideas come into being, evolve or change, and, in some cases, cease existence as practical conditions change (See Chapter 1). Study of these processes requires historical analysis and sociological insights, at least, but such study is itself only a heuristic tool and may have limited causal or explanatory value. Such analysis does recognize the role of ideas in human action and the detachment of ideas from their physical foundations.

An example of a goal for agents of social action is order. Maintenance of balance and equilibrium have been at the crux of many human activities and ideas.[60] One view has been that man would be an integral child of the universe without the encroachments of society, the state, and the economy. Another view has been that the fabric of society covers a barbarism that would explode without appropriate constraints, physical and non-physical. Among the actors are the economy, the state, and society. One view of the role of the state is to protect the individual from the evils of the economy and of society. A prevalent view in the United States is that in the market system, neither the individual nor the economy needs any state encroachment because forces are in place to limit abuses. The counter-argument is that the market system makes the individual ripe for exploitation from the economic sector and from government officials in collusion with the economic sector.[61]

What individual or social mechanisms are in place to provide order and organization? Of immediate interest is who benefits from order, the few or the many? Libertarianism offered the greatest individual good, utilitarianism offered the greatest good for the greatest number, and socialism offered the greatest good for all. In a democratic society, what mechanisms are in place to promote or sustain social order? Harold Lasswell and Jacques Ellul noted that these mechanisms may be "propaganda,"[62] and Pierre

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[60] *See* Cynthia Eagle Russett, The Concept of Equilibrium in American Social Thought (New Haven: Yale UP, 1966).

[61] *See* Herbert I. Schiller, The Mind Managers (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

[62] *See* Harold Lasswell, Propaganda Technique in the World War (New York: Peter Smith, 1927); Harold Lasswell, "The Theory of Political Propaganda," American Political

Bourdieu described "symbolic violence" in which language and ideas replace military or police authority and power.[63]

Whether one takes a liberal or conservative, radical or reactionary, or libertarian or communitarian approach to these issues, the issues and the means to address these issues all are ideas. Evaluations of these ideas as tools or agents of social action should not be appreciably different from evaluations of physical tools. As tools they have a purpose, and they either fulfill that purpose effectively or they fail to fulfill that purpose. Assessment of their physical origins is only one task necessary in such an evaluation. Individual use of these tools may be without any knowledge of their physical or historical origins. Evaluations of their truth or validity also may not be extremely useful, if such validity does not have an appreciable relationship to individual action. The more difficult task is the evaluation of the idea's purpose and the idea's effectiveness in meeting that purpose. Physical or external evidence is a factor in such evaluations. Such evaluations also carry an assumption of social order and a goal of knowledge, if not progress.

An Intellectual Model

An uncertain universe is more of a challenge than a certain universe and a fixed reality. Without the guarantee of progress, there exists the possibility of creating a useful human experience if not a change in physical reality. One envisions something of a lifeboat or a desert island experiment. No guarantees of survival exist, but the lifeboat passengers or island survivors can work together to reach agreement to survive or perish. What is the larger challenge: to find order or to create order? Such a challenge to create order requires negotiation, compromise, and consensus.

Science Review 21 (1927): 627-31; Jacques Ellul, Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes, trans. Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner (New York: Vintage, 1973).

[63]Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity, 1991) 51-52

Scientism offers the promise of the absolute even if humans do not have the capacity to perceive that absolute. Idealism offers a departure from reality, but one through which action may not be possible or desirable. Some middle course maintains hopes for the advancement of humanity and the means to achieve that advancement. At issue is how does one perceive, process, and communicate reality? Proposed, for further study and development, is a model of communication that presumes not a linear transfer of information or culture but a disjunctive process of construction and projection and then perception and reconstruction. The disjunction prevents full correspondence between construction and reconstruction and allows negotiation as a basis of reconstruction. The model applies to perceptions and reconstructions of reality as well as to communication between humans. Such a model allows the existence of a physical, objective reality and the existence of individual, subjective realities. In the course of constructions and reconstructions, individuals use socially and culturally derived ideas. Construction and reconstruction are subjective processes. Means of projection and capabilities for perception also may alter the correspondence between construction and reconstruction. Such a model also provides for negotiation of reality since lack of correspondence may result in compensatory measures. Communication gains importance as the currency of ideas, the constructions and reconstructions of physical reality.

Post-modernism recognizes the inherent reality of ideas and gives primacy to ideas. The post-modern challenge is to give ideas, as agents of social action, the attention that has gone to processes of energy and physical tools in affecting human action.[64] The challenge of the post-modern era also is to develop the means for analysis and evaluation of the non-physical universe of ideas. Science is self-limited in its analysis of mental constructions. All ideas are not rational or true, criteria for science, and yet they affect the actions and

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[64]Kenneth J. Gergen, The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life (New York: Basic Books, 1991) 7.

reactions of people in the physical universe. Such a post-modern analysis is not a denial of science. In a pluralistic universe, such as William James proffered, room exists for physical, even objective, reality.[65] Subjective reconstructions of reality are in conflict with physical reality and with each other.

The post-modern analysis also need not be an abandonment of interest in or attention to the fate of individuals, their social structures, or their political organization. The analyses should acknowledge those interests and the inherent assumptions at the outset. Without such interests and assumptions, post-modern thought easily becomes a dismissal of the human condition and as irrelevant to that condition as its critics contend. For the human condition to move into some fourth phase, analysis of the currency of ideas is essential.

Models of Communication

The next chapter will examine the development of the social model of communication and of the economic model of communication as background for the origins of the participatory idea of mass communication. Although an intellectual model of communication may be in competition with these models of communication, the intent is to look at the genealogy of the participatory idea of mass communication to test the effectiveness of the evaluative framework of ideas as agents of social agents.

Summaries of the characteristics of the social model and the economic models are as follows: In a social model, communication represents social order or a process to gain social order. Communication involves the interests of the group and is a collective process. By its nature, a social model involves two-way or interactive communication. The media of a social model are intermediaries or provide a milieu for social or cultural interaction. In an economic model, communication represents a resource for information or a commodity.

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[65]William James, A Pluralistic Universe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1977).

Communication involves the interests of the individual. Assumptions of an economic model are that the interests of a group are the aggregate of the interests of individuals and that communication is a discrete rather than a collective process. Flow of information is one-way since the medium is an institution or a source of information. In question are which models or assumptions are the basis of policy-making for communication systems and industries.

	Social Model	Economic Model	Intellectual Model
Nature of communication	Social order or a process to gain social order	A resource for information or a commodity	Currency of ideas and negotiation of reality
Theoretical foundations	Empathy Social organization Structural-functionalism	Utilitarianism Rational choice	Social construction Pragmatism Communication action
Interests	Interests of group and a collective process	Interests of the individual. Interests of a group are aggregate of the interests of individuals. Discrete rather than a collective process.	Interests are collective among participants
Information flow	Two-way or interactive communication	One-way flow of information	Two-way or interactive communication
Media	Media are intermediaries or provide milieu for social or cultural interaction	Medium is institution or source of information	Medium is site of construction or negotiation

Figure 2-2. Communication models.

CHAPTER 3
COMPETING MODELS

Introduction

Approaches to analysis of communication can fall conveniently into the nature, machine, and idea typology that has characterized the pre-modern, modern and post-modern constructions of scholarly analysis (See Chapter 2). Pre-modern communication was a condition of empathy among individuals or unity of individuals with their universe. The modern view of communication carried with it the mechanical or scientific assumptions of communication as a process. Communication was the transfer of information from one point to the next or even of culture from one generation to the next. The post-modern view of communication as the negotiation of reality and as the currency of ideas generally has not yet gained attention in public-policy debates. Such debates have centered on contentions between those supporting a social model of communication and those supporting an economic model. Although a post-modern model of competing ideas may be the next logical step in the nature, machine, and idea typology, the present effort is to develop an evaluative framework from that model and to test it with past policy-making efforts that have included the social and economic models in their arguments. Future policy-making debates may and should address constructions of reality in conflict.

Social Model

A social model of communication has its basis in the founding ideas of sociology and the eventual development of the notions of social organization and structural-

functionalism. The social model generally posits that communication plays a role in establishing or maintaining social structures. Essential to this social organization is the notion of the maintenance of social order. Unity was a key element for the foundations of sociology. As Montesquieu wrote in The Spirit of the Laws: "Love of the homeland leads to goodness in mores, and goodness in mores leads to love of the homeland. The less we can satisfy our particular passion, the more we give ourselves up to the passion for the general order."[1] Comte talked about universal consensus: "We...must insist on the principle which lies at the heart of every scheme of social organization – the necessary participation of the collective regime is the universal consensus of the social body."[2] The notion of harmony was also key:

> The scientific principle of the relation between the political and the social condition is simply this – that there must always be a spontaneous harmony between the whole and parts of the social system, the elements of which must inevitably be, sooner or later, combined in a mode entirely comfortable to their nature.[3]

Early sociologists distinguished between two types of social organization. In an ideal type of community, communication was not a process but a state of being. The notion of communication as shared meanings implied an empathetic totality as opposed to exchanges of information or emotions. As Ferdinand Tonnies noted, this empathy was a "reciprocal, binding sentiment...which keeps human beings together as members of a totality."[4] Illustrative of this empathetic model is the *Gemeinschaft* of Tonnies and the "mechanical solidarity" of Emile Durkheim. With the dislocations of advances in science, the French Revolution, and the rise of industrialism, these notions carried almost a

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[1]Charles de Secondat Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, trans. Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller, and Harold Samuel Stone (New York: Cambridge UP, 1989) 42-3.

[2]Auguste Comte, The Positive Philosophy, trans. Harriet Martineau (London: Bell, 1896) 127.

[3]Comte 127.

[4]Ferdinand Tonnies, Community and Society, trans. Charles P. Loomis (East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 1957) 47.

nostalgia for the pre-industrial village. Marx wrote in reaction to the excesses of industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century and shared with Comte and Durkheim interest in the lost unity of mankind: "The more deeply we go back into history, the more does the individual, and hence also the producing individual, appear as dependent, as belonging to a greater whole..."[5] Marx also envisioned a restoration of that unity in communism:

> This communism as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man – the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution.[6]

If community was totality, then society was a somewhat incomplete substitute. The *Gesellschaft* of Tonnies and the "organic solidarity" of Durkheim were illustrative of industrial-era structures of social order. In the absence of traditional bonds, structures arose to maintain social order. Communication played a key role in these structures. Related to these notions was the use of a biological metaphor to explain social order. The term "social organization" carries the root notion of society as organism. Comte and Durkheim promoted an organic view. In the twentieth century, two of Harold Lasswell's characteristics of mass communication, surveillance and correlation, carry the organic metaphor forward[7] as did the Chicago School's notion of social organization and the structural-functionalism of Talcott Parsons and of Robert Merton.[8]

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[5]Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Vintage, 1973) 84. Author's italics.

[6]Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, trans. Martin Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964) 135.

[7]Harold Lasswell, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society," The Communication of Ideas, ed. Lyman Bryson (New York: Harper, 1948) 38.

[8]*See* Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949); Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure: Toward the Codification of Theory and Research (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949).

Durkheim had noted that the organic comparison was only metaphoric.[9] A fundamental concern was the nature of society, particularly as distinguished from the individual and the state. Social dislocations that were the result of the French Revolution prompted Comte's interest in the nature of society with the weakening of existing social institutions including family, church, and associations.[10] In his earliest essay Comte wrote of the movement of disorganization that had agitated society and called for adoption of an "organic" attitude.[11] Philosopher John Dewey also provided some philosophical underpinnings for social organization and, in turn, social disorganization in Democracy and Education in 1916:

> Society exists through a process of transmission of information quite as much as biological life. This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the older to the younger. Without this communication of ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, opinions, from these members of society who are passing out of the group life to those who are coming into it, social life could not survive.[12]

Social disorganization was central to sociological research at the University of Chicago from 1910 until 1930.[13] Social disorganization had provided a rebuttal to the evolutionary theory of sociology, which provided a linear approach with similar stages of development for all civilizations.[14] The Chicago School of Sociology supported the view

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[9]Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society, trans. George Simpson (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1947) 131.

[10]Robert A. Nisbet, "The French Revolution and the Rise of Sociology," American Journal of Sociology 49 (1943): 180.

[11]Auguste Comte, Essays (London: Bell, 1911) 88.

[12]John Dewey, Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education, 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1944) 3.

[13]Lee Harvey, Myths of the Chicago School of Sociology (Aldershot: Avebury, 1987) 191.

[14]James T. Carey, Sociology and Public Affairs: The Chicago School, Sage Library of Social Research 16 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1975) 96.

that societies were in the midst of constant change and always disorganized to a certain extent.[15] William I. Thomas and Robert Ezra Park, the University of Chicago sociologists who helped to develop social disorganization as a sociological tenet, never fully outlined the notion. Park and Ernest Burgess in the Introduction to the Science of Sociology, a standard sociology textbook for two decades first published in 1921, described the virtues of village as personal with custom and law establishing relationships between individuals.[16] Social disorganization and individual disorganization precede all societal changes such as transformation from an agrarian to an industrial economy. Park and Burgess viewed social disorganization as a transitional phase with reorganization to follow.[17] "Normally the processes of disorganization and organization may be thought of as in reciprocal relationship to each other, and as cooperating in a moving equilibrium of social order toward an end vaguely or definitely regarded as progressive."[18]

Transition from the village to the city had its negative effects on inhabitants:

> In a great city, where the population is unstable, where parents and children are employed outside of the house and often in different parts of the city, where thousands of people live side by side for years without so much as a bowing acquaintance, these intimate relationships of the primary group are weakened and the moral order which rested upon them is gradually dissolved.[19]

Although Park and Burgess endorsed the idea that industrialization and urbanization had atomized society, they found some positive effects. "The energies thus freed have produced a world-wide ferment. Individuals released from old associations enter all the

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[15]Harvey 118.

[16]Robert Ezra Park and Ernest W. Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology, 3rd ed. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1967) 54.

[17]Park and Burgess 55.

[18]Park and Burgess 54.

[19]Robert Ezra Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Roderick D. McKenzie, The City (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1967) 312.

more readily into new ones. Out of the confusion new and strange political and religious movements arise, which represent the groping for a new social order."[20]

Despite the problems of the city, some saw positive results from the role of the mass media. Mass communication had offered the hope of transcending the community and reconstituting society and democracy on an enlarged scale. James W. Carey contended that Dewey, Park, and others "struggled to draw out of chaos both a knowable society and a democratic community."[21]

William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki in The Polish Peasant in Europe and America, published in 1927, attempted to distinguish between individual behavior as social disorganization and group behavior as social disorganization:

> We can define social disorganization as a decrease of the influence of existing rules of behavior upon individual members of the group. This decrease may present innumerable degrees, ranging from a single break of some particular rule by one individual up to a general decay of all the institutions of the group. Now, social disorganization in this sense has no unequivocal connection whatever with individual disorganization, which consists in a decrease of the individual's ability to organize his whole life for the efficient, progressive, and continuous realization of his fundamental interest.[22]

Although social disorganization eventually came to denote social pathology, its initial explication involved the notion that social order remained feasible because of common meanings and shared values. Communication systems played key roles in maintenance of these meanings and values. Development of the telephone, radio, cable television, and now computer communications have resulted in contentions that these systems could serve to reconstitute community or forestall disorganization.

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[20]Park and Burgess 867.

[21]James W. Carey, Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988) 267.

[22]William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, The Polish Peasant in Europe and America (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984) 191.

Park and Burgess also delineated the steps in social change – competition, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation – that provided a foundation for further research into the life of social movements.[23] Sociologist Herbert Blumer, who in 1946 provided the seminal analysis of social movements as collective behavior, noted the role of social organization. Blumer, in a chapter of Outlines of the Principle of Sociology that Park and Burgess edited in its original edition, brought into play the notion of shared meanings and common values:

> The guidance of behavior by common expectations always marks group activity that is under the influence of custom, tradition, conventions, rules, or institutional regulations. Thus, two things can be said: First, that the great bulk of collective behavior among human beings occurs because people have common understandings and expectations. Second, that the major portion of the field of sociology is devoted to the study of such collective behavior.[24]

The role of mass communication includes the transmission of those common meanings and shared values.[25] As Talcott Parsons noted:

> The core of a society, as a system, is the patterned normative order through which the life of a population is collectively organized. As an order, it contains values, and differentiated and particularized norms and rules, all of which require cultural references in order to be meaningful and legitimate.[26]

Parsons in The Structure of Social Action, first published in 1937, attempted to provide a unified theory of social action that contended that humans act within the constraints of social norms. Parsons argued that social systems rather than individuals were the basic units of analysis: "There are no group properties that are not reducible to systems of action and there is no analytical theory of groups which is not translatable into

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[23]Park and Burgess 506.

[24]Herbert Blumer, "Collective Behavior," Principles of Sociology, ed. Alfred McClung Lee. 3rd ed. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969) 68.

[25]Arnold Rose, Sociology: The Study of Human Relations (New York: Knopf, 1965) 583.

[26]Parsons 11.

terms of the theory of action."[27] Merton's major project also was to unify sociological theory. He attempted to organize the theory of functional analysis but noted that the theory had received criticism as merely a perpetuator of the status quo: "[S]tripped of those traditional postulates which have fenced it in and often have made it little more than a latter-day rationalization of existing practices, sociology has one beginning of a systematic and empirically relevant mode of analysis."[28]

Parsons's incorporation of the work of Durkheim and Max Weber into its theoretical framework and its defense of empiricism has resulted in criticism of structural-functionalism. As Denis McQuail noted, structural-functionalism involves a bias of social order:

> Social theory, as written by Parsons, aims with at least some success to achieve a reconciliation of those elements of Durkheim's work which emphasises the constraint exercised by social facts with Weber's view of human action as the making of meaningful choices in a universe of infinite variety. The element of subjective interpretation and the development and exchange of meaning is clearly present, hence differentiating human action systems from mechanical or organic processes, but the end result of a total social system theory is to bias attention towards system-maintenance and equilibrium.[29]

Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach also noted the failings of structural-functionalist theory: "One of the difficulties with the structural functional paradigm is that it stresses stability and equilibrium in society when it is obvious to even the most casual observer that urban industrial societies undergo constant change."[30] Sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf in 1958, for example, had distinguished between these two models of society. One model, that of structural-functionalism, was an orderly social organization with a foundation of the consensus of its members. The second model was social disorganization

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[27]Parsons 747.

[28]Merton 136.

[29]Denis McQuail, Communication (London: Longman, 1975) 45.

[30]Melvin L. DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach, Theories of Mass Communication 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 1989) 33.

or conflict with social order only the result of the constraint of some groups in society. Dahrendorf contended that the second model seemed more appropriate than the first on the basis of historical evidence. Dahrendorf countered Blumer's model of social order with social movements as only aberrations in that order since stasis rather than consensus dominates.[31] Dahrendorf contended that change is constant and conflict is ubiquitous, but subsequent critics have maintained that even Dahrendorf's "conflict theory" maintained the primacy of order.[32]

Sociologist George Homans took the opportunity of his inauguration as president of the American Sociological Association in 1964 to question the foundations of structural-functionalist theory and the role of the individual in analysis of social relationships. He titled his presentation, "Bringing Men Back In." Homans explained that structural-functional theorists had ignored the "psychology" of individuals in their analyses:

> [N]o matter what we say our theories are, when we seriously try to explain social phenomena by constructing even the veriest structures of deductive systems, we find ourselves, in fact, and whether we admit it or not, using what I called psychological explanations. I need hardly to add that our actual explanations are our actual theories.[33]

Despite critiques of structural-functionalist theory, communication scholars have found the theory useful to explain the role of communication and mass communication in society. Sociologist Gabriel Tarde boosted this notion with his contention that the "public" came into existence only after the creation of printing.[34] Mass distribution of information was necessary for a "public" to coalesce. (See Chapter 2). Although Tarde dealt with the

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[31]Ralf Dahrendorf, Toward a Theory of Social Conflict," The Journal of Conflict Resolution 2.2 (1958): 174-5.

[32]George Ritzer, Sociological Theory, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992) 262.

[33]George C. Homans, "Bringing Men Back In" The American Sociological Review 29 (1964): 816.

[34]Gabriel Tarde, Of Communication and Social Influence (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1969) 279.

public as society, others have associated the notion of the public with community. Dewey equated the public with the unity of *Gemeinschaft.* Dewey also saw communication as being the provider of that unity. Those economic and political forces that brought the transition from community to society also, according to Dewey, brought the "eclipse of the public." Dewey contended that democracy has to remain both a social idea and a form of political organization.[35] Despite the increased complexity of society and the continued presence of institutions from simpler times, railways, travel and transportation, commerce, and the mails, telegraph, telephone, and newspapers created enough similarity of ideas to keep society going on as a whole, for they created interaction and independence.[36] Dewey decried the eclipse of the public that industrialization and urbanization had brought, but he was optimistic that reorganization could come:

> The ties which hold men to together are numerous tough, and subtle. But they are invisible and intangible. We have the physical tools of communications as never before. The thoughts and aspirations congruous with them are not communicated, and hence are not common. Without such communication the public will remain shadowy and formless, seeking spasmodically for itself, but seizing and holding its shadow rather than its substance.[37]

Habermas has offered a similar notion with his description of the "public sphere." Although Habermas did not quite put the public sphere into the unity of *Gemeinschaft,* he also traced the effects of industrialization and socialization on the "structural transformation of the public sphere."[38]

In the social model of communication, the process of communication provides the links for social organization and in industrial societies mass communication provides those

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[35]John Dewey, The Public and Its Problems (Denver: Swallow, 1927) 143.

[36]Dewey, Public and Its Problems 114.

[37]Dewey, Public and Its Problems 142.

[38]Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1989) 171-5.

links when traditional relationships are not in place. Such a notion of communication also gives it a normative quality: Improvements in communication will bring improvements in social organization. Lack of effective communication could bring social disorganization, if societies actually exist as anything but aggregates of individuals.

Economic Model

Foundations of an economic model include the rational choice theory that had its foundations in the notions of a market economy and utilitarianism. Political economist Adam Smith in 1771 addressed the role of the individual in promoting a common good in the market system:

> [B]y directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for society that it was no part of his intention. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it.[39]

In 1789, political economist Jeremy Bentham explicated the notion of utility: "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do."[40] Bentham also succinctly summarized the difference between social and economic models of explanation: "The community is a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting it. The interest of the community then is, what? – the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it."[41]

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[39]Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976) 456.

[40]Jeremy Bentham, A Fragment on Government and an Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (New York: Macmillian, 1948) 125.

[41]Bentham, 126.

Sociologists, among others, have disagreed about the role of the individual in social action. Parsons, in The Structure of Social Action, minimized the value of the economic approach to social action:

> The economic concept makes sense only for systems of action, but it is applicable to the system of action of a particular individual – 'Crusoe economics.' The next conceptually important step in increasing complexity of systems of action comes with the inclusion of a plurality of individuals in the same system.[42]

Marx used the same analogy in his criticism of utilitarianism: "The individual and isolated hunter and fisherman with whom Smith and [David] Ricardo begin belongs among the unimaginative conceits of the eighteenth century Robinsonades..."[43]

Parsons attempted to show the evolution of social theory from utilitarianism to social action in the context of social norms such as Durkheim's "social facts." Parsons attempted to show that the theories of Alfred Marshall, Vilfredo Pareto, Durkheim, and Weber provided this evolution of thought, although Weber had posited theories of rationalization that included the analysis of means and ends.[44] Parsons found in utilitarianism decision-making without a full context:

> The utilitarian type of theory concentrated on the means-end relationship and left the character of ends on the whole uninvestigated. This was sound. But in so far as it tended to become a closed system on a positivistic basis it was forced to the assumptions that ends were random relative to the positivistically determinate elements of action.[45]

Despite such contentions, use of rational choice theory has continued to make headway into political science and sociology. Nobel laureate Gary S. Becker summarized his approach: "[A]ll human behavior can be viewed as involving participants who maximize their utility from a stable set of preferences and accumulate an optimal amount of

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[42]Parsons 767.

[43]Marx, *Grundrisse* 83

[44]Hans A. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, ed., From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford UP, 1946) 1398.

[45]Parsons 699.

information and other inputs in a variety of markets."[46] Becker, with appointments in both economics and sociology at the University of Chicago, saw a greater application for the economic approach than that of the social approach: "If this argument is correct, the economic approach provides a unified framework for understanding behavior that has long been sought by and eluded Bentham, Comte, Marx, and others."[47]

While proponents of a social model indicate that common meanings are the basis of social order, Jon Elster noted that without rationality neither social order nor communication would be possible:

> Communication and discussion rest on the tacit premise that each interlocutor believes in the rationality of the others, since otherwise there would be no other point to the exchange. To understand other people, we must assume that, by and large, they have consistent desires and beliefs and act consistently upon them. The alternative to this assumption is not irrationality, which can only be predicated on a broad background of rationality, but chaos.[48]

Elster compared the rational choice approach and the social norms approach and found the social norms approach untenable. Elster acknowledged that social norms may affect human decisions, but "social norms are prior to individuals in the explanatory order, and cannot simply be reduced to subjective feelings about what to do."[49] Elster noted that social norms may explain why, at some points, rationality fails, but they cannot provide a comprehensive theory of human behavior:

> For one thing, it is incomplete, since it does not tell us what will happen if the feasible set contracts so that the formerly chosen behavior becomes impossible. For another, there are innumerable examples of traditional behavior being discarded when new opportunities become available – not because they are better embodiments of the value inherent in customary behavior, but because the individual finds they serve his goal better.[50]

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[46]Gary S. Becker, The Economic Approach to Human Behavior (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1976) 14.

[47]Becker 14.

[48]Jon Elster, ed., Rational Choice (Washington Square, NY: New York UP, 1986) 27.

[49]Elster 23.

[50]Elster 23.

In 1956, communication scholar Fred S. Siebert summarized the assumptions of an economic model of communication:

> Man, say the libertarians, is a rational animal and is an end in himself. The happiness and well-being of the individual is the goal of society, and man as a thinking organism is capable of organizing the world around him and of making decisions which will advance his interests.[51]

Siebert acknowledged that humans are not always reasonable in their actions, but "in the long run, they tend, by the aggregate of their individual experiences, to advance the cause of civilization."[52] Siebert identified the functions of the mass media in a libertarian system as to inform, to entertain, and to provide the financial support for their economic independence.[53]

The Marketplace

Some critics argue that the market or economic model of communication assumes that the audience ultimately holds the media accountable. Ralph Lowenstein and John Merrill have contended that the model may be only an expedient:

> Is not the marketplace of media accountability nothing more than an uncritical rationale built into the fabric of the capitalist system, purporting to give it a moral foundation when really it is not more than an essential and pragmatic part of a business and market economy?[54]

Another subject of critique is the economic model's assumption of information and entertainment as commodities. Herbert I. Schiller in 1973 summarized this viewpoint: "America's media managers create, process, refine, and preside over the circulation of images and information, our behaviors. When they deliberately produce messages that do

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[51]Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, Four Theories of the Press (Urbana, IL: U of Chicago P, 1956) 40.

[52]Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm 40.

[53]Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm 51.

[54]Ralph Lowenstein and John Merrill, Macromedia: Mission, Message and Morality (New York: Longman, 1990) 223.

not correspond to the realities of social existence, the media managers become mind managers."[55] Such an analysis has its basis in critical theory 's notions of hegemony, arising from Marxist notions of commodification.[56] Although Marx characterized man as producer and emphasized the material nature of human existence, Becker excluded Marxism from an economic approach to human behavior:

> But to the Marxist, the economic approach means that the organization of production is decisive in determining social and political structure, and he places much emphasis upon material goods, processes, and ends, conflict between capitalists and workers, and general subjugation of one class by another. What I have called the 'economic approach' has little in common with this view.[57]

Critical scholars also have questioned whether mass media are a diversion from class and political issues: "Television is only the latest and most effective instrument for inducing individual passivity."[58] Even for critical scholars, with their interest in the collective, the individual became the focus of an economic model of analysis.[59]

Evaluative Framework

To summarize, in the social model communication represents social order or a process to gain social order and in the economic model communication represents a resource for information or a commodity. The economic model and the social model have been alternatives in US policy-making for communications. The participatory idea of mass communication represents an offshoot of the social model of communication.

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[55]Herbert I. Schiller, The Mind Managers (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973) 1.

[56]Jennifer Daryl Slack and Martin Allor, "The Political and Epistemological Constituents of Critical Communication Research," Journal of Communication 33.3 (1983): 214.

[57]Becker 9.

[58]Schiller 30.

[59]Richard Wolin, The Terms of Cultural Criticism: The Frankfurt School, Existentialism, and Poststructuralism (New York: Columbia UP, 1992: 48-49.

Both the social and economic models of communication include normative as well as explanatory functions. If in the social model, communication is necessary for social organization, can more effective communication prevent social disorganization? If in the economic model communication provides information for good decision-making, will more effective communication improve decision-making? Also under study are the roles of these normative considerations in public discourse and policy-making.

The next three chapters are historical analyses of the development and evolution of the participatory idea of mass communication. Chapter 4 examines the application of the idea in the 1920s, Chapter 5 looks at its evolution through the early 1970s with the almost full penetration of television in US society and the growth of cable television, and Chapter 6 is an examination of challenges to the participatory idea with the introduction of interactive technologies in the 1970s and 1980s. A review of the role of the participatory idea of mass communication in public discourse and governmental debates that surrounded the development of broadcasting in the 1920s and the regulation of the cable television industry in the 1960s, 1970s, and the 1980s offers a test of the usefulness of an evaluative framework for communication policy-making that focuses on ideas as agents of social action. Chapter 7 will evaluate the findings of these analyses.

CHAPTER 4
THE IDEA: APPLICATION IN THE 1920S

Introduction

Between November 11, 1918, Armistice Day for World War I, and October 28, 1929, the beginning of the Great Depression, the United States moved through a series of social and economic dislocations as the nation adjusted to a new world order, as the car and airplane helped to make the population more mobile, and as the nation divided on issues of immigration and the production and sale of alcohol. Commentators on the period indicated that in the aftermath of the war, US society was undergoing reorganization. Edward L. Bernays, a founder of public relations, in 1961 recalled the era of transition: "With the war over in 1920, America entered a period of change. This demanded greater adjustment of groups and individuals. Political changes speeded up the processes of democracy. Education and literacy spread. The agencies of mass communication increased in size and number."[1] Harold Lasswell in 1927 also noted the dislocations: "The ever-present function of propaganda in modern life is in large measure attributable to the social disorganization which has been precipitated by the rapid advent of technological changes."[2]

The Great War had challenged the assumption of inevitable progress and raised questions about the appropriate role of the United States in world affairs. Isolationism prevailed as the United States refused to join the League of Nations that its late president,

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[1]Edward L. Bernays, Crystallizing Public Opinion (New York: Liveright, 1961) xxxxv.

[2]Harold D. Lasswell, "The Theory of Political Propaganda," American Political Science Review 21 (1927): 631.

Woodrow Wilson, had helped to organize. The automobile and airplane helped to establish new geographical relationships. Domestic politics had brought the scandal of the Teapot Dome investigation. The Ku Klux Klan, which began in the aftermath of the Civil War to oppose Reconstruction in the South, in the mid-1920s became a political force throughout the United States and a national political issue. Klan members continued their diatribes against blacks, Catholics, and Jews but also promoted morality, including opposition to drinking. The Volstead Act, which prohibited the manufacture, distribution, and sale of intoxicating beverages after 1919, also delineated the cleavages between white, middle-class, Protestant Americans, particularly in the Midwest, and urban dwellers, Catholics, Jews, and immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Congress formalized these divisions with passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 that limited immigration from southern and eastern Europe. The "Negro problem" also had moved North, beginning in 1916, as the boll weevil devastated cotton crops and the industrialization in the South had placed a growing population of blacks and whites in competition for the same training and the same jobs. The wartime experience of black soldiers also had raised their expectations for their share of the "American Dream."

In the midst of these social and political changes and challenges, a new communications medium moved from an experimental novelty to a national institution. KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, went on the air November 4, 1920, for the first scheduled broadcast, election returns from the Harding-Cox presidential race. Sales of radios mushroomed through 1922, and by 1924 radio had become a political tool in the campaigns for president. Debates during the decade about appropriate regulation of the broadcasting spectrum culminated with passage of the Radio Act of 1927 and creation of the Federal Radio Commission. The act provided something of a compromise between those who advocated full federal control of broadcasting and those who wanted broadcasting to remain a private enterprise. The federal Radio Act allowed federal licensing of private broadcasting stations with the stipulation that these private companies operate

with the "public interest, convenience, and necessity." The Radio Act was the basis for broadcasting regulations of the Communications Act of 1934.

Debate about the role of broadcasting in 1920s national life highlighted interest in a search for a unifying force. Optimism about broadcasting as a means of greater citizen participation in government stood in contrast to the social and political divisions of the day. The census of the 1920 showed for the first time that urban dwellers outnumbered rural dwellers in the United States. The political activities of the Ku Klux Klan, Prohibition, and the Immigration Act of 1924 all were, at least, partly efforts to preserve the white, middle-class Protestantism of the Midwest against perceived onslaughts from the ethnic, and related religious, challenges of urban areas. Wilbur Schramm, in the 1948 introduction to a collection of articles about the emerging field of mass communication, described a social environment that might require such a defense:

> The typical community has until recently been small and relatively homogeneous. From generation to generation its members could expect to live under approximately the same patterns of culture and values. Its members dwelt, worked, worshipped, and played with the same group of persons in the same place. A person could easily comprehend his whole community, and members of the community needed no more than face-to-face communication to reach agreement and understanding.[3]

Schramm indicated that industrialization and transportation had wrought drastic changes in the community but mass communication could serve to counter or ameliorate those changes: "[W]e have begun to wonder whether quick and constant communication, wide and effective communication, may not be the only way a civilized society can survive."[4]

Participation

This chapter will examine the historical, social, and political factors that contributed to the participatory idea of mass communication that arose in the 1920s. Constructions of

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[3]Wilbur Schramm, ed., Communications in Modern Society (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1948) 2.

[4]Schramm, Communications 2

mass communication have included widespread distribution of messages, transmission of institutional messages to a large, anonymous audience, promotion of the status quo to the detriment of individual or collective opposition, transmission of culture from generation to generation, and mass participation in social and political processes. Broadcasting helped to advance the notion of the participation of individual members of the mass audience in a collective social or political process through their simultaneous but discrete reception of messages from an institutional source. This construction extends the notion of mass communication past the mere receipt of messages to establishing a "sharing" of messages and a "community" of media users.[5]

The participatory idea of mass communication, in the 1920s, served as a counter to the dislocations and fragmentations of the era, if only for those in the mainstream of political and social life. Critics of the movies and broadcasting argued in the 1920s that these media unnecessarily raised social and economic expectations of audience members and created further dislocations when those expectations were unmet.[6] Similarly, arguments for participation, unity, and inclusion that mass communication, particularly broadcasting, could provide may have resulted in unwarranted expectations of inclusion for those still at the margins of the political and social mainstream.

The New York Herald in 1924 offered a radio magazine as a guide through "Radioland."[7] Such a construction, that mass communication can be the basis of

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[5]Melvin L. DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach, Theories of Mass Communication 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 1989) 325.

[6]*See* Donald Young, "Social Standards and the Motion Picture," The Motion Picture in its Economic and Social Aspects, ed. Clyde L. King and Frank A. Tichenor, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 128 (Philadelphia: AAPSS, 1926); Armstrong Perry, "Weak Spots in the American System of Broadcasting," Radio: The Fifth Estate, ed. Herman S. Hettinger, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 177 (Philadelphia: AAPSS, 1935).

[7]"New York Herald Radio Magazine," Advertisement, New York Times 6 Jan. 1924: 13.

consensus through shared receipt of messages, has been the brunt of much criticism because of the implication of two-way or interactive participation in what essentially is a one-way process. This chapter also will examine challenges to the participatory idea of mass communication that also arose in the 1920s.

Historical Factors

Starting points for the construction of "mass communication" as mass distribution are numerous. They include invention of the printing press and movable type in Germany in 1456, circulation of the "penny press" in the United States in 1833, invention of the telegraph in 1835, the beginning of commercial broadcasting in the United States in 1920, and the introduction of network television programming in 1948. Each of these technological developments removed barriers of time and space for communication as delivery of messages became more instantaneous and with broadcasting, simultaneous. Each successive technological development increased the ability to reproduce messages for dissemination to larger and larger audiences.

Development of media of mass communication seems inexorably intertwined with the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution provided the means to develop the tools of mass distribution while weakening the traditional links of pre-industrial communities and promoting the growth of mass communication.[8] Interpersonal communication was the pre-industrial model, and mass communication was the industrial model. Such a pre-industrial model does not preclude the widespread dissemination or multiple reproductions of information. Such dissemination was, of course, hierarchical, since information came down from the monarch or the church. The political and social transformations that occurred with the industrial revolution brought the need for more lateral communication

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[8]Richard Maisel, "The Decline of Mass Media," Decline of the Global Village: How Specialization is Changing the Mass Media, ed. James E. Grunig (Bayside, NY: General Hall, 1976) 74.

among members of a new "public."[9] If initial distribution of messages was hierarchical, development of democratic ideals brought the need for mass distribution of information, so individuals could provide exchange of political views.

Access to information became a fundamental component of democratic traditions.[10] Mass communication providers became intermediaries between the government and the public. The public used information from the media to make political decisions. Wilbur Schramm described this view of the role of mass communication in 1960:

> When political freedom had been won for the common man, mass communication was able to reach, over the heads of the specially privileged and the specially educated, to the great masses of men who had need of information in order to play their proper parts in democracy and to take advantage of the opportunities they were being offered. Political democracy, economic opportunity, free public education, the Industrial Revolution, and mass communication were woven together in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to make a great change in human life and national relations.[11]

John Merrill and Ralph Lowenstein also described a three-step process of evolution of communication. In the first, pre-industrial, the elite have access to and control the means of communication. In the industrial phase, access to information is widespread for mass audiences. In the third step, the post-industrial phase, information goes to targeted audiences with fragmentation of the mass audience.[12]

Although even the earliest media provided a means for mass distribution of information, the term "mass communication" apparently did not come into use until the twentieth century. One of the earliest references to "mass communication" was in an

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[9]Gabriel Tarde, Of Communication and Social Influence (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1969) 279.

[10]James W. Carey, "The Mass Media and Democracy: Between the Modern and the Postmodern," Journal of International Affairs 47 (1993) 9.

[11]Wilbur Schramm, ed., Mass Communications: A Book of Readings Selected by the Director of the Institute for Communication Research at Stanford University (Urbana: U of Illinois P, Urbana, 1960) 3.

[12]John Merrill and Ralph Lowenstein, Media, Messages, and Men (New York: Longman, 1971) 37.

advertising handbook in 1923: "The development of radio broadcasting is presenting another possibility of mass communication which probably will be utilized for advertising purposes. It is too early to predict what its possibilities may be or how successfully it may be used."[13] A 1933 federal study of social trends referred to "agencies of mass impression."[14]

Scholarship of the 1920s

Scholars and media practitioners in the 1920s searched for ways to explain the role of communication in shaping public opinion and the effects of such formations. Propaganda might have sufficed as a descriptive term for the field of study, but in the aftermath of World War I, the term carried negative connotations at odds with the ideals of journalism. Ivy Lee, a leader in development of the public relations profession, indicated that propaganda, despite its negative connotations, played a key role in all efforts to communicate: "Derivatively, the word has a precise meaning – the projection of ideas. But in practice the process of propaganda has been so often polluted, poisoned and prostituted that it is difficult to think of it in its strictly derivative sense."[15] Publication of several books in the 1920s addressed public opinion and propaganda and, for some, heralded the beginning of what is now mass communication research in the United States. These books included William McDougall's The Group Mind, published in 1920; Walter Lippmann's Public Opinion, published in 1922; Edward Bernays's Crystallizing Public Opinion, published in 1923; and Lasswell's Propaganda Technique in the World War, published in 1927.

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[13]Daniel Starch, Principles of Advertising (Chicago: A. W. Shaw, 1923), 866.

[14]President's Research Committee on Social Trends, Recent Social Trends in the United States (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933) 215.

[15]Ivy L. Lee, "The Problem of International Propaganda," London, 3 July 1934.

The Group Mind

McDougall's work is of particular interest because the "group mind" is descriptive of one construction of public opinion as having an existence beyond the aggregate of individual minds.[16] While social psychology was still in its formative stage of development in the 1920s, the notion of a "group mind" provided a rationale for a psychology of a social entity. Although Wilbur Schramm and others have included the social psychological studies of Carl Hovland and Kurt Lewin during World War II as foundations for mass communication research, the intellectual origins of social psychology in the nineteenth century parallel those of mass communication, particularly the cultural studies construction. The "group mind" included various incarnations in the 1920s including discussions of the "mob mind," "crowd mind," and "herd instinct."

Scholars and journalists argued against uncritical participation in groups. A pamphlet of the American Civil Liberties Union pitted the "mob mind" against civil liberties.[17] Despite the violence of the Klan and other groups of the period, the pamphlet's author, Everett Dean Martin, cited daily newspapers as the leader in "crowd thinking par excellence" and derided the lack of original thought: "Our thinking on most important subjects today is as little original as the mental processes of the men and women who write, and the machines which print the pages we read and repeat as our own opinions."[18] The president of American Association of Teachers of Journalism shared his concern about the "herd mind" in his 1926 presidential address, published in the Journalism Bulletin, a

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[16]William McDougall, The Group Mind: A Sketch of the Principles of Collective Psychology With Some Attempts To Apply Them to the Interpretation of National Life and Character (New York: Putnam's, 1920).

[17]Everett Dean Martin, "The Mob Mind vs. Civil Liberty" (New York: ACLU, 1920). The pamphlet was a series of extracts from Martin's Behavior of Crowds, also published in 1920.

[18]Martin 9.

predecessor to Journalism Quarterly.[19] Nelson Antrim Crawford placed the blame for the "herd mind" not on the mainstream media but rather on tabloids and presentations of "sex, gold, and blood."[20] Crawford argued that journalism schools should work to identify those with critical faculties who deal with the "herd mind" and that re-education was necessary to carry people away from their herd instincts: "The primitive instincts of people have come to the surface; they are going to be expressed in one way or the other. The press may follow and encourage the people on the road to a dead uniformity of ignorance, superstition, and pretended virtue. Or it may lead the people, by strictly psychological means, to realistic concepts of life."[21]

Grant M. Hyde in a 1931 issue of Journalism Quarterly described a series of seminars at the University of Wisconsin, beginning in 1923, that attempted to address public opinion and the press. Among the works under study in 1924 and 1925 were McDougall's Group Mind and Martin's Behavior of Crowds along with Gustave LeBon's The Crowd, Wilfred Trotter's Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War, and William Martin Conway's The Crowd in Peace and War.[22] Hyde indicated that the studies "gave us insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the various theories of the crowd mind. Certainly that is one approach that must be considered in delving into public opinion."[23] In 1926-27, the seminar studied "group psychology versus individual psychology in order to gain a better understanding of the crowd mind."[24]

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[19]Nelson Antrim Crawford, "Psychological Leadership for Journalism," Journalism Bulletin 2 (1926): 1.

[20]Crawford 2.

[21]Crawford 5.

[22]Grant M. Hyde, "Public Opinion and the Press," Journalism Quarterly 8 (1931): 78.

[23]Hyde 75.

[24]Hyde 76.

McDougall, in his study of the "group mind," saw media of mass communication as key components in the process of nation-building and maintaining a society:

> Although then, the platform and the orator and the assembly remain important influences in modern times, it is primarily the telegraph, wireless telegraphy, the printing press, and the steam engine, that have rendered possible the large modern nations; for these have facilitated the dissemination of news and the expression of feeling and opinion on a larger scale, and free circulation of persons.[25]

McDougall contended that without such communication citizens would not have adequate knowledge of one another and "no vivid consciousness of a common welfare and a common purpose."[26] Communication also provided the opportunity for collective interaction: "Of these means of reciprocal influence the press is the most important; though; of course, its great influence is only rendered possible by the railway and the telegraph."[27] McDougall indicated, however, public opinion is not the aggregate of individual opinions but is:

> (R)ather the expression of that tone or attitude of mind which prevails throughout the nation and owes its quality far more to the influence of the dead than of the living, being the expression of the moral sentiments that are firmly and traditionally established in the mind of the people, and established more effectively and in more refined forms in the minds of the leaders of public opinion than in the average citizen.[28]

Public Opinion

British political scientist Graham Wallas advanced the notion of "thought-organization," the need to compensate for the impersonal communication that mass media

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[25]McDougall, Group Mind 183.

[26]McDougall, Group Mind 183.

[27]McDougall, Group Mind 183.

[28]McDougall, Group Mind 271-2.

had created.[29] Wallas compared the public opinion of the agricultural village on the day after each villager had discussed an important event with each other and the "public opinion" of a new suburb "where no one knows his neighbor and each season-ticket holder reads his newspaper in silence in the morning train."[30] Wallas attributed his analysis to the psychological writings of William James with their notions of sensation and instinct and that man sometimes acts in an irrational manner.[31]

James's Principles of Psychology, first published in 1890, dealt with the philosophical as well as the physiological aspects of the mind and its functions.[32] James published Principles of Psychology in 1890 and then ended his work in psychology to begin philosophical pursuits.[33] Wallas saw the opportunity for application of James's "new psychology" in education and politics.[34] Wallas wrote Human Nature in Politics in an attempt to overcome the "tendency to exaggerate the intellectuality of mankind."[35] The Great Society was Wallas's second book to apply the "new psychology" to politics.[36] Walter Lippmann, who had studied with James and with Wallas, when he was a visiting lecturer at Harvard in 1910, was a popularizer for both of Wallas's books.[37]

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[29]Graham Wallas, The Great Society: A Psychological Analysis (New York: Macmillan, 1932) 281.

[30]Wallas, Great Society 281.

[31]Martin J. Wiener, Between Two Worlds: The Political Thought of Graham Wallas (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971) 86.

[32]Gerald E. Myers, William James: His Life and Thought (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986) 61.

[33]Myers 7.

[34]Wiener 89-90.

[35]Graham Wallas, Human Nature in Politics (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1948) 45.

[36]Wiener 104.

[37]Benjamin F. Wright, Five Public Philosophies of Walter Lippmann (Austin: U of Texas P, 1973) 26.

Lippmann, in Public Opinion, argued that representative government would not work unless an independent expert organization existed to make sense for decision-makers "of the knowledge of the world beyond their reach."[38] Lippmann also contended that the real environment is too complex for direct acquaintanceship.[39] He envisioned a new role for political science:

> The newspapers are regarded by democrats as a panacea for their own defects, whereas analysis of the nature of news and of the economic base of journalism seems to show that the newspapers necessarily and inevitably reflect, and therefore, in greater or less measure, intensify, the defective organization of public opinion. My conclusion is that public opinion must be organized for the press if they are to be sound, not by the press as is the case today. This organization I conceive to be in the first instance the task of a political science that has won its proper place as formulator, in advance of real decision, instead of apologist, critic, or reporter after the decision has been made.[40]

Both sociologist Robert Ezra Park and philosopher John Dewey produced reviews of Public Opinion that were critical of Lippmann's proposal for development of "thought organization" to facilitate decision-making in the government.[41] Lippmann had called for development of "information bureaus" in the federal cabinet offices and at other levels of government.[42] Park in the American Journal of Sociology [43] and Dewey in the New Republic[44] questioned Lippmann's assumptions, particularly that newspapers had failed to meet the communication needs of democracy.[45] Park argued that the accuracy of news

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[38]Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York: Macmillan, 1949) 31.

[39]Lippmann, Public Opinion 16.

[40]Lippmann, Public Opinion 32.

[41]Lippmann, Public Opinion 25.

[42]Lippmann, Public Opinion 381.

[43]Robert Ezra Park, rev. of Public Opinion, by Walter Lippmann, American Journal of Sociology 28 (1922): 232-4.

[44]John Dewey, rev. of Public Opinion, by Walter Lippmann, The New Republic 3 May 1922: 286-8.

[45]Lippmann, Public Opinion 32.

"depends upon the advancement of social science"[46] and that to serve its role in democracy news has to be intelligible and, in turn, interesting.[47] Park contended that "it is the task of the common school to make the facts about our common life intelligible to the ordinary man."[48]

Dewey characterized Public Opinion as "perhaps the most effective indictment of democracy as currently conceived ever penned."[49] Dewey acknowledged that Lippmann had identified some fundamental problems of democracy but had not gone far enough to find a solution:

> When necessity drives, invention and accomplishment may amazingly respond. Democracy demands a more thoroughgoing education than the education of officials, administrators, and directors or industry. Because this fundamental general education is at once so necessary and so difficult of achievement, the enterprise of democracy is so challenging. To sidetrack it to the task of enlightenment of administrators and executives is to miss something of its range and challenge.[50]

Dewey expanded his criticism of Public Opinion in a series of lectures published in 1927 as The Public and Its Problems.[51] Dewey argued in that volume that democracy has to remain both a social idea and a form of political organization.[52] Despite the increased complexity of society and the continued presence of institutions from simpler times, travel and media of communication, the mails, telegraph, telephone, and newspapers, created enough similarity of ideas to keep society going on as a whole, for they created interaction

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[46]Park, Opinion 234.

[47]Park, Opinion 234.

[48]Park, Opinion 234.

[49]Dewey, Opinion 286.

[50]John Dewey, The Public and Its Problems (Denver: Alan Swellow, 1927) 158.

[51]James W. Carey, "Communications and the Progressives," Critical Studies in Mass Communication 6 (1989): 273.

[52]Dewey, Public 143.

and independence.[53] Dewey decried the "eclipse of the public" that industrialization and urbanization had brought,[54] but he was optimistic that reorganization could come: "Communication alone can create a great community. Our Babel is not one of tongues but the signs and symbols without which shared experience is impossible."[55]

Public Relations

Formation of public opinion also has a commercial value. Edward Bernays, in Crystallizing Public Opinion, noted the role of propaganda in business. Bernays helped to establish the foundations for the field of public relations and attempted to separate that field from notions of publicity and press-agentry. Bernays contended that public relations involved a long-term relationship to represent the interests of the public to business and the interests of business to the public. He noted that despite its roots in the eighteenth century, the term "public opinion" did not enter Webster's Dictionary until 1920 and "propaganda" became a household term only after World War I.[56] Bernays linked the development of a public relations industry to the propaganda efforts of World War I: "The giant-scale propaganda on the part of the nations at war resulted in heightened recognition of the possibility of shaping events and so increased the scramble for free publicity after the war."[57]

Ivy Lee, another of the founders of public relations, emphasized the role of mass psychology in developing corporate or public relations. Lee dealt extensively with the

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[53]Dewey, Public 114.

[54]Dewey, Public 114.

[55]Dewey, Public 114.

[56]Bernays xxxii.

[57]Bernays xxxii.

"psychology of the multitude."[58] Lee emphasized the role of mass psychology in the formation of public opinion: "Indeed, mass psychology itself has been subjected to research which has revealed amazing possibilities as to effective methods of moving the hearts and reaching the minds of the collective man. These studies of mass psychology have so far tended to perfect methods by which the emotions of the collective man can be touched and stirred."[59]

Lee argued that even mass psychology has its limits, that members of the public eventually would tire of the manipulation of their emotions. Propaganda provided a suitable and effective means of conveying information with safeguards: "The essential evil of propaganda, and its only menace, therefore, is not in the effort itself to disseminate ideas. The evil is the *failure to disclose the source* of the information."[60]

Propaganda

Although analysts of Harold Lasswell's work in propaganda indicate that concern about war propaganda stirred interest in communications studies,[61] Lasswell's analysis found mass communication to be a cause as well as an effect of dislocations: "We live among more people than ever, who are puzzled, uneasy, or vexed at the unknown cunning

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[58]Marvin N. Olasky, The Development of Corporate Public Relations, 1850-1930, Journalism Monographs 102 (Lexington, KY: AEJMC, 1987) 28

[59]Ivy L. Lee, Publicity: Some of the Things It Is and Is Not (New York: Industries Publishing Company, 1925) 22.

[60]Lee, Publicity 10 (author's italics).

[61]Wilbur Schramm, "Human Communication as a Field of Behavioral Science: Jack Hilgard and His Committee," Human Communication as a Field of Study, ed. Sarah Sanderson King (Albany: SUNY P, 1989) 14; Jesse Delia, "Communication Research: A History," Handbook of Communication Science, ed. Charles R. Berger and Steven H. Chaffee (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1987) 28-9.

which seems to have duped and degraded them. It is often an object of vituperation, and therefore, of interest, discussion and, finally, of study."[62]

In two separate publications in 1927, Lasswell characterized propaganda not only as a necessary component of a nation at war but also as a necessary component of a nation at peace. In Propaganda Techniques in the World War, Lasswell indicated that propaganda had replaced the war dance in mobilizing populations "into one amalgamated mass of hate and will and hope."[63] He described propaganda as the "new hammer and anvil of social solidarity." Lasswell, in an essay, "The Theory of Political Propaganda," also identified propaganda as an inherent part of modern democracy:

> Impersonality has supplanted personal loyalty to leaders. Literacy and the physical channels of communication have quickened the connection between those who rule and the ruled. Conventions have arisen which favor the ventilation of opinion and the taking of votes. Most of that which formerly could be done by violence and intimidation must now be done by argument and persuasion. Democracy has proclaimed the dictatorship of palaver, and the technique of dictating to the dictator is named propaganda.[64]

In a contemporaneous analysis of the literature of public opinion and propaganda, Lowell Juillard Carr in 1929 provided the following critique of the works of Lippmann, McDougall, Lasswell, and Bernays as well as Lucy Maynard Salmon, the author of The Newspaper and the Historian:

> Since the war public opinion has become a term for social scientists to conjure with. Walter Lippmann has challenged political scientists to build democracy on the stereotypes of the man in the street. Professor McDougall has warned the social psychologists that the Group Mind may not be safe for democracy at all. Miss Salmon has analyzed the values of the newspaper for the historians. Propaganda, unknown to the Reader's Guide before 1915, now haunts the apologists for the press and supplies Lasswell with the material for a devastating analysis of the mechanisms of our war hysterias. The practitioners of the new profession blandly

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[62]Harold D. Lasswell, Propaganda Technique in the World War (New York: Peter Smith, 1927) 2.

[63]Lasswell, World War 221.

[64]Lasswell, Political Propaganda 631.

tell us how the counsel of public relations manipulates our minds for peaceful profit.[65]

Carr argued that study of public opinion should not be an analysis merely of the content of that opinion but the process in the formation of that opinion.[66] Carr also contended that the process of formation of public opinion is a readjustment to changing conditions such as "the impact of new inventions, the influx of new population elements, the diffusion of a new sentiment or mass-emotion."[67]

Formation of Opinion

Formation of public opinion in the 1920s included readjustments to a national revival of the Ku Klux Klan, enforcement of Prohibition, restrictions on "new population elements" with the Immigration Act of 1924, migration of black Americans from the South to the North, and the birth of broadcasting.

Ku Klux Klan

When members of the 1924 radio audience tuned into the marathon of the Democratic National Convention, a principal issue of disharmony and debate was a platform plank on the Ku Klux Klan. The debate came prior to the more than one-hundred ballots that would place John W. Davis, a compromise candidate at the head of the Democratic ticket. Still vying for convention delegates were Al Smith, the governor of New York, a Catholic, a "wet" sympathizer, and Klan opponent; and Henry McAdoo, the former secretary of the treasury who had the unofficial endorsement of the Klan. Democratic leaders argued that the Klan issue could only hurt the chances of the Democratic

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[65]Lowell Juillard Carr, "Public Opinion as a Dynamic Concept," Sociology and Sociology Research 13 (1928-1929): 18.

[66]Carr 23.

[67]Carr 28.

nominee since the major factions of the Democratic Party included the urban, ethnic "wets" and Southern "drys" who still refused to support Republicans because of the party's Civil War stance on slavery and emancipation.[68] The proposal at the Democratic convention to condemn the Klan by name failed by one vote, initial reports indicated, although a recount showed failure by four votes and a fraction.[69]

Although Davis eventually issued a statement that condemned the Klan, Calvin Coolidge, who had become president at the death of Warren G. Harding, easily won election as Robert M. LaFollette waged a campaign on the Progressive ticket. Although public opposition to the Klan stemmed from its rhetoric against racial and religious groups and its extralegal efforts to enforce the law and its notions of morality, the rapid growth of the Klan in the 1920s and its political victories in the West and Midwest indicated that the movement had broad-based appeal. The New York Times in 1923 reported on Klan activity on Long Island.[70] The Klan may have been a result as much as a cause of the social dislocations of the era.

William McDougall in 1925 described the Ku Klux Klan as "composed in the main of solid, seriously minded, pious, and patriotic Americans whose chief defect seems to be lack of a sense of the ridiculous."[71] Recent scholarship also contends that the Klan was more than ignorant rural rabble, attempting to stave off the black, the Jew, and the Pope.

68"Convention By One Vote, Defeats Plank Naming Klan, Bryan in Bitter Debate, Pleading for Party Unity; Proposal for League Referendum Wins, Despite Baker," New York Times 29 June 1924: 1.

69"Anti-Klan Men Lost By 4.30 Vote Margin," New York Times 30 June 1924: 1.

70 "Klansmen March to Negro Church Service, Profess Friendship and Give $200 in Gold," New York Times 10 Nov. 1923: 1.

71 William L. McDougall, The Indestructible Union: Rudiments of Political Science for the American Citizen (New York: Little, 1925) 151. A native of Great Britain, McDougall won election as Fellow of the Royal Society for his research in physiology. He also conducted research in anthropology, social psychology, and abnormal psychology. His research efforts in parapsychology eventually brought him disdain from his colleagues in psychology. *See* Edna Heidbreder, "William McDougall and Social Psychology," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 34 (1939): 150-60.

Membership of the Klan in the Midwest, a stronghold of the hooded organization in the 1920s, the West, and the North was middle-class and Protestant and representative of a group that thought itself under attack.[72] At a national meeting in 1923, Klan officials outlined the challenges they faced with an increasing number of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe whom they contended would not assimilate into US society:

> At the time of the 1920 census, of our population fifteen million belong to this element. Here is the source of some of the protest that America is not an Anglo-Saxon country. And here is a problem facing America about which Klansmen should be learning and thinking, for the time will soon come when they must act.[73]

Charles J. Orbison, identified as an Indiana judge, advised Klan officials to oppose direct election of the president because of the proportionally fewer number of native-born Americans in New York, Massachusetts, and New Jersey: "The time is coming when the Americans of the West, South, and Middle West must Americanize the East and it can't be done by putting the supreme power in the hands of a foreign-made section of our country."[74]

The Klan represented the social mainstream and not its fringes.[75] Frank R. Kent, vice president of the Baltimore Sun, described Klan members, in 1923, as "narrow-minded but well-meaning men, who believe they are helping to 'save the country.'"[76] Kent contended that the majority of Klan members were not, by nature, violent:

> Mostly, there are members of the same evangelical churches that support the Anti-Saloon League, and the Klan ritual, the fiery cross, the mask and the gown, the

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[72]David M. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan (New York: Franklin Watts, 1981).

[73]Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (1923; New York: Arno Press, 1977)17.

[74]Knights 25.

[75]Leonard J. Moore, "Historical Interpretations of the 1920s Klan: The Traditional View and the Populist Revision," Journal of Social History 24 (1990): 347.

[76]Frank R. Kent, "Ku Klux Klan in America," Ku Klux Klan, ed. Julia E. Johnsen (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1923) 49.

> solemnity and secrecy of their gatherings, give them a veritable of self-righteousness, a smug feeling of rectitude, and a cheap and entirely safe thrill.[77]

Protestant ministers provided support and served in leadership posts for the 1920s Klan.[78] An observer of the Texas Klan in 1923 observed the role of church leaders in the secret society: "The head of the Dallas Klan now is a Christian preacher, an oil speculator and an Elk. The most wholesale approval of the Ku Klux Klan was expressed in a Dallas speech by the man whom the Methodists have just elected head of the church in North Texas."[79] Klan officials also urged church leaders to set aside their differences:

> We should work constantly with the ministers of protestant churches with a view of having at least once or twice a year great mass meetings, wherein all protestant churches will for the time be combined together as one church, laying aside their differences in denominational beliefs, and gathering together with one purpose in view, the worship of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.[80]

The central target of the Klan, despite its bigoted rhetoric, was the white power structure that had failed to diffuse economic prosperity and to enforce bans against immoral behavior.[81] Klan officials countered charges of lawlessness with calls for better law enforcement:

> We are within our rights as American citizens when we demand of men who are put in offices of trust that they shall faithfully perform the duties of their offices. It is quite evident that those who oppose us on this principle do not want the laws of our country enforced, and are seeking to cover their anarchistic spirit by impugning our motives and imputing criminality in us.[82]

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[77]Kent 49.

[78]Chalmers 135.

[79]George Clifton Edwards, "Texas: The Big Southwestern Specimen," These United States: Portraits of America from the 1920s, ed. Daniel H. Borus (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1992) 355.

[80]Knights 47.

[81]Moore 353.

[82]William James Mahoney, "Some Ideals of the Ku Klux Klan," Ku Klux Klan, ed. Julia E. Johnsen (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1923) 55. Mahoney was identified as the Imperial Klokard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

A focus of Klan activity, in addition to punishments for moral turpitude and family neglect, was enforcement of Prohibition. Klan members sometimes prodded and sometimes substituted for law enforcement officers in the identification of violators of the Volstead Act. The Klan members also followed through to provide trial and punishment for those they deemed as offenders. H. W. Evans, Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, contended, in 1923, that the targets of the Klan were the customers of as well as the sellers of illegal liquor:

> (T)he man who traffics with the man who violates the Eighteenth Amendment is just a little worse than the man who sells, because the man who sells takes a chance at the penitentiary, and the man who buys, takes none. Our responsibility will end when the disloyal man understands that our country is no place for him, and that there is no spot of ground in all this broad land of ours so foul that his foot is fit to tread it, and when the law-breaker will know that punishment swift, sure, and severe is the certain result of his malefaction.[83]

Peter H. Odegard, who in 1928 chronicled the success of the Anti-Saloon League in winning congressional approval of the Volstead Act, acknowledged that the Anti-Saloon League and the Klan had the same constituency: "The rural Protestant seems to be a natural-born reformer. To him the city is a place of vice and corruption, a fleshpot to be feared. It is the home of the 'foreign element' which he abhors."[84] Although Odegard indicated that League leaders had no sympathy for the Klan, which strongly supported Prohibition, he acknowledged that Klan members would have been comfortable with comments of William H. Anderson, a leader of the Anti-Saloon League in New York.[85] Anderson had described those who opposed Prohibition as "a lot of unwashed, wild-eyed foreigners who have no comprehension of the spirit of America."[86]

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[83]Knights 20.

[84]Peter H. Odegard, Pressure Politics: The Story of the Anti-Saloon League (1928; New York: Octagon Books, 1966).

[85]Odegard 233.

[86]William H. Anderson as quoted in Odegard, 233.

Prohibition

Prohibition was more than a battle of morality between those who supported and those who opposed drinking. The Eighteenth Amendment did not specifically prohibit drinking. The amendment outlawed the manufacture, distribution, and sale of intoxicating beverages. Permitted were consumption of intoxicating beverages already in homes at the time of ratification of the amendment, home production of beverages with determination of their intoxicating nature on a case-by-case basis, and dispensing of alcohol for medicinal purposes. Enforcement varied from locale to locale. Enactment of Prohibition came to counter the concentration of economic forces in the liquor industry,[87] to stem the onslaught of foreign influence, and to provide more efficient economic production.

Earl L. Douglass in Prohibition and Commonsense, a 1931 publication of the Alcohol Information Center, left little doubt in regard to the nature of the Prohibition battle. In a chapter titled "Keeping America American," Douglass argued that the issues of Prohibition were not simply that of pro-liquor or anti-liquor:

> The struggle, in the last analysis, is not just between the proponents of a specific measure dealing with the liquor evil. It is the struggle between old Europe and new America, between the demands of a machine age and the principal desire for indulgence, between the right of the majority to rule and the attempt of a minority to defy the laws which the majority pass.[88]

Douglass argued that concentrations of immigrants in cities had not only maintained their ethnic culture but undermined the traditional American values: "There was being established in the East an area which was only American in name. In custom, sentiments and ideals it was European."[89] True American values were in the interior of the United

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[87]Although the Anti-Saloon League made the "liquor trust" the target of its offensives, cooperative efforts of liquor interests generally began after the League won legislative victories. K. Austin Kerr, Organized for Prohibition: A New History of the Anti-Saloon League (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985) 24-5.

[88]Earl L. Douglass, Prohibition and Commonsense (New York: Alcohol Information Committee, 1931) 296.

[89]Douglass 264.

States, in the Midwest. Ohio was the site of the founding of the Anti-Saloon League, and the Ohio league became the model for the rest of the nation.

The Anti-Saloon League established the Safety and Efficiency Bureau to disseminate materials about industrial efficiency and personal safety in an increasingly complex technological society.[90] Douglass acknowledged that industrialization played a role in growing support for prohibition in a chapter titled, "The New Day of the Machine." Supporters of Prohibition argued that the steady hand of sobriety was necessary in the machine age: "Liquor had always been recognized as an evil; industrial leaders at last came to see that it was also the nation's chief source of waste."[91] Douglass argued in 1925 that the successful passage of Prohibition was more than the result of a moral crusade: "Many people will support a movement solely because it is right. The majority, however, become interested only when it appears that this movement will contribute to their economic betterment."[92]

Despite arguments for the industrial efficiency of Prohibition, business began to question the effects of the Eighteenth Amendment on their tax burden since federal, state, and local governments no longer collected liquor and beer taxes.[93] Division within the Anti-Saloon League, increasing questions about enforcement of the law, and the beginning of the Great Depression helped to push Congress toward repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.[94] As Franklin D. Roosevelt was beginning the first "100 Days" of the New Deal, Prohibition ended December 5, 1933. Douglass had argued in 1931 that repeal of Prohibition was not just the end of anti-saloon policy but a defeat for America: "The

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[90]Kerr 151.

[91]Douglass 154.

[92]Douglass 154.

[93]Kerr 270.

[94]Kerr 268-273.

struggle between prohibition and anti-prohibition forces is primarily a struggle between an old European tradition and more recent American tradition. Prohibition is the clean-cut American policy for handling a very ancient evil."[95]

Immigration Act of 1924

When Congress approved the Immigration Act of 1924, the targets were the southern and eastern European and Mediterranean peoples as well as the Japanese. These Europeans conveniently also happened to be the "wets," the urban Catholics and the Jews that the Klan and the Anti-Saloon League opposed. Klan officials praised passage of the immigration limits.[96] The intent was to preserve the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic stock that had built America in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Current Opinion magazine contended that some nationalities, the Italians, the Poles, the Russians, the Greeks, and the Slavs, could not assimilate into US society: "There is no blinking the fact that certain races do not fuse with us, and have no intention of trying to become American."[97] Other objectives of the immigration policy were to forestall competition to US workers[98] and to maintain national security through the exclusion of radicals.[99]

William McDougall had addressed the question of the anthropological future of US civilization in 1921 with the question: "Is America safe for democracy?"[100] McDougall reviewed debates over race and eugenics, the science of improving the qualities of a species, and argued that one method to guarantee against decline of US civilization was to

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[95]Douglass 247-248.

[96]Chalmers 283

[97]"Guarding the Gates Against the Undesirables," Current Opinion April 1924: 400.

[98]"A Slap at Japan," Current Opinion June 1924: 759.

[99]"The Problem of Immigration," Current Opinion Feb. 1923: 203.

[100]William McDougall, Is America Safe for Democracy? (1921; New York: Arno Press, 1977).

guarantee higher incomes for members of "select classes" who increased the size of their families.[101] By 1925, McDougall had found that immigration restrictions also would help to protect US civilization: "(T)here is somewhere a limit to the number of immigrants of alien stocks and traditions that America can absorb without grave danger to her institutions, her ideals, and perhaps her racial quality and national unity."[102] McDougall argued that while the typical American such as Daniel Boone was public-spirited, pious, and patriotic, "(r)aces that have lived for many generations in the shade of the date palm and the banana tree to do not produce such men."[103]

Such views were not merely scholarly exposition. Proponents of immigration restrictions used similar genetic and eugenic theories to argue that residents of southern and eastern Europe were not capable of full assimilation into US society.[104] Among those testifying before Congress in support of immigration restriction were Madison Grant, author of The Passing of the Great Race; and Lothrop Stoddard, author of The Rising Tide of Color. Harry Laughlin, superintendent of the Eugenics Record Office and editor of the Eugenical News became the "expert eugenics agent" for the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization.[105] Laughlin contended in 1922 that the new immigrants were inferior to their predecessors: "Making all logical allowances for environmental conditions, which may be unfavorable to the immigrant, the recent immigrants, as a whole,

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[101]McDougall, Democracy 199-200.

[102]McDougall, Indestructible Union 139.

[103]McDougall, Indestructible Union 135-6.

[104]Kenneth M. Ludemerer, "Genetics, Eugenics and the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924," Bulletin of the History of Medicine 46 (1972): 66.

[105]Ludemerer 67.

present a higher percentage of inborn socially inadequate qualities than do the older stocks."[106]

The Immigration Act of 1924 restricted immigration quotas to 2% of population levels in the 1890 census, prior to the wave of immigration from southern and eastern Europe. The act also excluded immigration from Japan, but that action may have been a means to gain political support from Western congressmen for limitations on European immigration rather than the central focus of the act.[107] Whatever its economic implications, Calvin Coolidge, in accepting the Republican nomination for president, indicated that restriction of immigration was key to the future of the nation: "We must remember that every object of our institutions of society will fail unless America be kept American."[108]

The Negro Problem

Although Congress in the 1920s could try to stem the tide of immigration from southern and eastern Europe, another tide was flowing from South to North. The Great Migration carried southern blacks to employment opportunities in the Midwest and the North and away from brutal treatment in the South.[109] World War I had limited foreign immigration at the same time that Northern defense industries needed more workers. The Southern population, black and white, was growing, the boll weevil in 1916 had devastated the Southern cotton crop, and the success of the "New South" was bringing

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[106]Harry H. Laughlin, "Analysis of America's Modern Melting Pot," Hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 67th Congress, 3rd Sess. (Washington, GPO, 1922) 755.

[107]Peter H. Wang, Legislating Normalcy: The Immigration Act of 1924 (San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1975) 90.

[108]"Text of Mr. Coolidge's Address Accepting Party's Nomination," New York Times, 15 Aug. 1924: 2.

[109]Stewart E. Tolnay and E. M. Beck, "Racial Violence and Black Migration in the American South, 1910 to 1930," American Sociological Review 57 (1992) 113.

industrialization that was pitting white workers against black workers for the same training and jobs. W. E. B. DeBois acknowledged in 1925 that the black and white workers, if united, would have presented a formidable force against the Southern plutocracy but Southern leaders effectively used racism to give white workers a feeling of superiority rather than a livable wage and divided the labor force to prevent effective organization.[110]

War service and the migration brought black Americans out of the South through the 1920s. Also coming out of the South was violence against blacks. During the war, race riots came to Missouri and Pennsylvania, and racial violence after the war came in 1919 to Washington, DC; Chicago, and Omaha, and in 1920 to Minnesota and Kansas.[111]

William McDougall, in 1921, also offered suggestions to America on solving the "Negro problem" with birth control information, but McDougall, then a professor of psychology at Harvard, acknowledged that "among both white and colored people it will be put into practice only by the most far-sighted, prudent, and self-controlled; while the most ignorant, careless, and improvident will continue to behave as they always have behaved."[112] By 1925, McDougall had decided that the migration of blacks to the North had increased racial prejudice in that region and had forestalled support for full amalgamation of blacks into US culture, particularly if that amalgamation included "race blending."[113] McDougall envisioned the best solution for the "Negro problem" as full segregation of blacks and whites with creation of a black territory either in the United States or abroad. Whatever the costs of such a project, McDougall argued that the results would be worthwhile:

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[110]W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, "Georgia: Invisible Empire State," These United States: Portraits of America from the 1920s, ed. Daniel H. Borus (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1992)98.

[111]Chalmers 110.

[112]McDougall, Democracy 196.

[113]McDougall, Indestructible Nation 161.

> Would it not befit a nation that boldly claims the moral leadership of the world to clean its slate, and to wipe out a stain for its record by a great national effort which would at the same time solve finally and gloriously its most distressing problem, one that, if not boldly dealt with may prove a lasting and increasing danger to the health and even to the very life of the nation.[114]

Gunnar Myrdal in his 1944 study, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy, found that blacks and whites in the North were living in two different worlds:

> There are many educated Northerners who are well-informed about foreign problems but almost absolutely ignorant about Negro conditions both in their own city and in the nation as a whole. This has great practical importance for the Negro people. A great many Northerners, perhaps the majority, get shocked and shaken in their conscience when they learn the facts. The average Northerner does not understand the reality and the effects of such discriminations as those in which he himself is taking part in his routine of life.[115]

Broadcasting

Amid these divisions of race, religion, and region and diversions of the Roaring 1920s, with jazz, flappers, and the rise of Hollywood, a new novelty arrived. KDKA went on the air in 1920 and by 1922 millions of households had become part of the radio frenzy. "Radio has come to stay," a 1924 ad declared. "It has gripped the country as nothing else has ever done."[116] Radio historians suggest three stages of radio development: radio as curiosity and scientific experiment, radio as link to remote and diverse geographic site, and radio as a mass medium of news, entertainment, and advertising.[117]

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[114]McDougall, Indestructible Nation 165.

[115]Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (New York: Harper, 1944) 48.

[116]"New York Herald Radio Magazine," Advertisement, New York Times 6 Jan. 1924: 13.

[117]*See* Catherine L. Covert and John D. Stevens, ed., Mass Media Between the Wars: Perceptions of Cultural Tension, 1918-1941 (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 1984); Susan J. Douglas, Inventing American Broadcasting: 1899-1922 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP,

Even as radio was in its infancy, predictions of the benefits of mass communication were beginning. In 1921, President Warren G. Harding made his Armistice Day address to the nation through a telephone network and invoked the Independent magazine to declare a new day of national unity: "It is a great moment in the life of a nation when the hearts of the whole people beat in unison."[118] The Independent predicted a revival of direct democracy. The magazine also warned about the consequences of abuse of this new communications power:

> What a limitless vista is opened for a democracy like ours when space and time are thus annihilated and all our citizens can brought into an intimate contact with Government at Washington as if they sat together in a New England town meeting of the olden time. The latter-day miracles have such possibilities unheard of for unifying and concentrating public opinion, but in connection with this must not be overstated the new opportunities it may open up to the demagogue of the silver tongue and brazen heart.[119]

The possible power of radio as a mass medium became more evident March 7, 1924, when a network of five US radio stations and the British Broadcasting Company broadcast speeches from the Technology Club of New York. A report in the magazine, Outlook, heralded radio as "The New Social Force" and asserted that "[w]ith almost stunning suddenness the radio has become a power boundless in possibilities for good or evil ... Now within a few weeks it has become a force in public opinion and public taste fitly comparable to the press."[120] Outlook noted that Frank A. Vanderlip, a former Treasury Department official and former bank president in New York, had compared the radio to the revival of the Roman Forum on a world-wide scale: "He hailed it as a possible means for the salvation of democracy."[121]

1987); and Susan Smulyan, Selling Radio: The Commercialization of American Broadcasting, 1920-1934 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution P, 1994).

[118] "Lend Me Your Ears," Independent 10 Dec. 1921: 258

[119] "Ears" 258.

[120] "Radio – The New Social Force," Outlook 19 Mar. 1924: 465.

[121] "Social Force" 465.

The evolution of the role of radio in politics and national life continued with the 1924 presidential election. Eunice Fuller Bernard, in the New Republic, predicted a significant transition in US life: "In 1924 for the first time in the history of these United States a presidential candidate will have the chance to be judged out of his own mouth by any large proportion of the electorate. For by radio that campaign will notably be waged."[122] The election marked the first broadcasting of the GOP and Democratic national conventions, and candidates and party officials decided that radio provided a more efficient use of resources.[123] President Calvin Coolidge, the GOP nominee, indicated that he planned to make most of his campaign speeches from the White House.[124] Broadcasters indicated, at the time, that the resources of radio for national campaigns were inadequate. No formal radio networks yet were in place and the ad hoc arrangements for national broadcasts required some stations in a community to leave the air voluntarily to allow the public affairs programs to proceed. Because of the limitations of the temporary network arrangements, broadcasts from Cleveland, Ohio, the site of the GOP national convention; and New York City, the site of the Democratic national convention, went only as far west as Kansas City. Although long-distance lines connected the participating radio stations for each convention, the commercial radio network that the American Telephone Company organized, with its flagship station, WEAF, did not begin operations until October 1924, after the conventions.[125] Republican Party and Democratic Party officials were able to choose which cities would constitute the radio networks for their conventions.[126]

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[122]Eunice Fuller Bernard, "Radio Politics," The New Republic 19 Mar. 1924: 91.

[123]"Keynote at Night To Aid Radio Fans," New York Times 17 June 1924: 2

[124]"Political Speakers to Seek Votes By Radio," New York Times 29 June 1924: II, 15.

[125]William Peck Banning, Commercial Broadcast Pioneer: The WEAF Experiment, 1922-26 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1946) 257.

[126]Banning 240.

Election Year

Radio manufacturers realized the sales possibilities of an election year. Teledyne developed a sales pitch based on the election frenzy: "Who'll be nominated? It's a presidential year. Let Teledyne give you the voice of government in the air – speeches of candidates – the thrill of big political conventions."[127] Radio quickly changed the tone and the tempo of the political campaigns. The onset of broadcast campaigning brought questions about the interest of listeners in the long speeches of some politicians.[128] The Democratic Party delayed its convention keynote speech, so a larger broadcast audience could hear the address. Politicians' growing interest in campaign broadcasting intensified questions of the day about funding of broadcasting. Radio station executives worried about who was going to foot the bill for the network political presentations. The national party organizations declined to pay the costs of the broadcast networks for the conventions.[129] The Democrats furthered the cause of broadcasting with an extended debate over a Ku Klux Klan plank in the party platform and a dramatic nominating process that went 100 ballots and named John W. Davis as the compromise candidate for president. News reports indicated work stoppages and missed appointment as listeners tuned in for the convention results: "Radio...has gained many new listeners and thousands now have a keener interest in politics."[130]

Attitudes about the role of broadcasting in public life evolved through 1924. The Nation contended that while the campaign of 1924 might be "the radio year," the medium was of transitory importance: "Radio has come to stay, but it is none the less a fad. Like the bicycle, it may have overreached its market – and broadcasting stations may follow the

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127"Teledyne." Advertisement, New York Times 1 Apr. 1924: 12.

128"Keynote" 2.

129"Candidates Plan Final Radio Drive," New York Times 19 Oct. 1924: 6.

130"Radio's Sudden Glory at the Convention," New York Times 6 July 1924: II, 13.

cinderpath into oblivion. There are millions 'listening in' every evening this year. Some other fad will hold the attention of most of them in 1928. And as the fad dies, broadcasting will decline."[131] The Nation declared after the Democratic convention: "Radio never weathered such endurance tests as during the Democratic Convention, but the broadcasting of those dreary sessions probably established it firmly as a household necessity – and pest."[132] Within a month, the magazine's editorial writers were reflecting on the full social effects of the radio as presidential election results would come to millions of homes simultaneously: "It is difficult to grasp the meaning of this intrusive mechanism and appreciate the changes it is working in our social habits...'Revolutionize' is an overworked word; but it is no exaggeration to say that the cheap automobile, the telephone, and the radio are revolutionizing American home life."[133] The New York Times declared, after the election campaign, that members of the audience "have come to expect from the radio a daily miracle."[134]

The New Republic, after the election, was not certain of the exact effect of radio on national politics: "Did the radio play as great a part in the campaign as its admirers predicted? That is a question which must remain forever unanswered. It assuredly did not succeed in getting out any larger vote than in former years."[135] The magazine questioned the fairness of the election campaign and contended that Republicans owned more radio stations and provided more funding for broadcasts, to the disadvantage of the Democrats and particularly to the Progressive Party. Even these advantages failed to make much difference in the election results: "Radio probably helped Mr. Coolidge somewhat; though

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131"Politics by Radio," editorial, The Nation 2 Jan. 1924: 5.

132Editorial, The Nation 23 July 1924: 85.

133Editorial, The Nation 27 Aug. 1924: 203.

134"Broadcasting Worthy of the Name," editorial, New York Times 2 Nov. 1924: 18.

135Editorial, The New Republic 19 Nov. 1924: 284.

too much belief in its powers is prevented by recalling Mr. Harding's landslide accomplished without benefit of microphone."[136]

The first radio campaign also brought analysis of the future relationship between the newspaper and the radio. Reporter Marc A. Rose, in The Nation, recalled in past elections the crowds outside newspaper office waiting for election returns, but in 1924, those at the newspaper office declined in number:

> Where were the absentees? Why, at home, grouped in front of the loud-speaker. The old family hootodyne that had brought in the sweet unison of Cleveland, the raucous disturbance of Madison Square Garden, the speeches of Bob and John and Cal, wound up the campaign by reporting its results.[137]

Rose predicted that broadcasting would become a greater source of news and information but that newspapers would continue to prosper: "My own opinion...is that radio cannot be strangled, that it will play an ever-increasing role as disseminator and publisher of news, but as the ally, not the enemy of the newspaper."[138]

Regulating Broadcasting

At the end of 1924, the nation was still two years away from congressional approval of regulation of the new broadcasting medium. Regulation of wireless communication in 1910 and 1912 ostensibly dealt with maritime safety. Issues of debate in the 1920s included who should receive licenses to broadcast, methods of funding broadcasting, the appropriateness of advertising on radio, whether monopoly interests would control radio, what role government would play in regulation, and whether the appropriate content of broadcasting should be for entertainment or educational purposes. The secretary of commerce initially had authority to grant licenses for broadcasting, but a

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[136]Editorial, The New Republic 19 Nov. 1924: 284.

[137]Marc A. Rose, "Radio or Newspaper – Can Both Survive?" The Nation 24 Dec. 1924: 699.

[138]Rose 700.

series of court challenges limited that authority. Calls for federal regulation included efforts to end of chaos in broadcasting and to end interference. Licensing could bring order since only one station could effectively broadcast on one frequency at one time. The Radio Act of 1927 and the Communications Act of 1934, which subsumed it, provided a criterion of the "public interest, convenience, and necessity" in the granting of licenses and operation of radio stations.

With the "public interest standard" Congress accepted a "public trustee" compromise between full-market approach and a full-public-ownership approach to regulation of broadcasting.[139] A full-market approach would have given license holders, for a price, ownership of the spectrum. A full public ownership of the spectrum would have provided governmental control of organization and content. The "public trustee" approach left unresolved questions about content and First Amendment, definition of public interest, media concentration, and diversity.

The Radio Act of 1927 and the Communications Act of 1934 established the market model of the US system of broadcasting and the broadcasting spectrum as a scarce resource. The "scarce resource" argument has allowed the government to oversee licensing of broadcasting stations and more effectively advocate social goals.[140] The Communications Act of 1934 also established a framework for the regulation of mass communication.

Those who supported an economic model have indicated that Congress did not go far enough, since the Communications Act of 1934 did not attach any market value to the spectrum.[141] Those who supported a social model indicated that Congress went too far in

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[139]Erwin G. Krasnow, Lawrence D. Longley, and Herbert A. Terry, The Politics of Broadcast Regulation, 3rd. ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982) 25; Don R. Pember, Mass Media Law, 4th ed. (Dubuque, IA: Brown Publishing, 1987) 543.

[140]Krasnow, Longley and Terry 15.

[141]*See* Arthur S. De Vany, A Property System Approach to the Electromagnetic Spectrum (San Francisco: Cato Institute, 1980).

legitimating a market system of broadcasting.[142] While the Congress provided a guideline of public interest, convenience, and necessity, the nature of public interest or common good varies as to the appropriate model. For those in the economic model, the common good is an aggregate of individual goods. Consumers vote with their fingers on the dial and with purchases, and the broadcasting system would not maintain programming that does have strong consumer support.[143] Counter to this notion are arguments that the market system, in its attempt to gain the most favor, will avoid controversy and views that are other than the status quo.[144] More importantly, the market system, particularly if only a few providers of content exist, gives the consumer only a limited choice of options.[145]

National Unity

Meeting the "public interest" included the maintenance of American and ostensibly middle-class values that many thought under siege in the 1920s and 1930s. Despite social divisions, broadcasting received the task of unification.[146] Broadcasting assumed a role in the 1920s that national magazines and journals had occupied in the immediately previous

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[142]*See* Robert McChesney, Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for the Control of US Broadcasting, 1928-1935 (New York: Oxford UP, 1993).

[143]Mary S. Mander, "The Public Debate About Broadcasting in the Twenties: An Interpretive History," Journal of Broadcasting 28 (1984): 184.

[144]Richard E. Labunski, The First Amendment Under Siege: The Politics of Broadcast Regulation (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981) 11.

[145]Harvey J. Zuckman and Martin J. Gaynor, Mass Communication Law in a Nutshell (St. Paul, MN: West, 1983) 323.

[146]Denis McQuail, Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction, 3rd ed. (London: Sage, 1995) 35.

decades.[147] Knitting together the country in the 1920s were news and opinion magazines that all carried the same basic format. Current Opinion, Forum, Independent, Literary Digest, and Outlook all presented summaries of news and commentary, particularly selections for other similar publications and from newspapers. Topics of interest during this period included the shock of World War I, the League of Nations, war reparations, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, and the decline of white civilization. Articles and editorials were varied but included world affairs, politics, literary criticism, dramatic criticism, movies, science and technology, and religion. The magazines included debates on the theory of relativity and on Freud's psycho-analysis. Literary Digest devoted an entire section to radio during its essentially amateur phase but brought the topic back to the "Science and Invention" section after broadcasting began. The journals also carried stories about radio transmission of still photographs, radiovision (television), and making radio contact with Mars. Although they varied somewhat in political perspective, the magazines provided a canon of middle-class civility. Blacks, Jews, Catholics, Japanese and Southerners were the "others." Most of these magazines did not survive through the 1930s.

In a 1980 analysis of the role of magazines in the "mythic community" in the 1930s, Stephen Louis Recken contended that the publications "served a liturgical function by invoking the communal mores of the village past."[148] The magazines were a repository and promoter of values:

> Through this liturgical function the accepted beliefs of the community were voiced and affirmed, to the reassurance of readers. Magazines transmitted traditional ideals and applied them to changing patterns concerning such subjects as success, the place of technology, the role of women, and foreign affairs. Through the ritual of

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[147]Doris Marguerite Will Meadows, diss., Creed of Caste: Journalism and the Race Question During the Progressive Era, 1900-1914, New York U, 1984 (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1989) v.

[148]Stephen Louis Recken, "The Mythic Community: The Search for Order in the 1930s," diss., Washington State U, 1980, 201.

> asserting village mores Americans, in a decade of crisis, could believe that the simple truths of the past persisted.[149]

Recken identified the radio, along with magazines and refrigerators, as "symbols of class and values."[150] Although Recken discussed the ownership of radio as a middle-class value, he did not address the role of broadcasting in creating a "mythic community."

Waldemar Kaempffert, in 1924, had noted the somewhat tenuous nature of national unity and community in the broad expanse of America: "These little towns, these unmarked homes in vast counties seem disconnected. It is only an idea that holds them together, the idea that they form part of a territory called 'our country.'"[151] Kaempffert and other commentators in the period described broadcasting as a great unifier and as a tool for the return to direct democracy.[152] William S. Paley, the president of CBS, contended in 1935 that US broadcasting had played a significant social role because of its private ownership: "Here, radio has been from the beginning not an instrument made by government, but rather an instrument for the making of government."[153]

A 1924 article in the Independent described the destiny of radio as being the "creator of a new unity" and "as the universal and all pervading system for the distribution of thought."[154] David Sarnoff was equally as enthusiastic in an article in The Nation in 1924 and contended that radio "more and more will become the universal voice."[155]

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[149]Recken 201.

[150]Recken 201.

[151]Waldemar Kaempffert, "The Social Destiny of Radio," Forum June 1924: 771.

[152]*See* Clayton R. Koppes, "The Social Destiny of Radio: Hope and Disillusionment in the 1920s," South Atlantic Quarterly 68 (1969): 363-76.

[153]William S. Paley, "Radio and the Humanities," Radio: The Fifth Estate, ed. Herman S. Hettinger, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 177 (Philadelphia: AAPSS, 1935) 94.

[154]J.B., "Broadcasting in the Public Interest," Independent 29 Mar. 1924: 170.

[155]David Sarnoff, "Uncensored and Uncontrolled," The Nation 23 July 1923: 90

Sarnoff, an executive of the Radio Corporation of America, tried to assess the historical significance of radio: "It is the first method of communication discovered by man whereby millions of people can instantaneously and simultaneously be reached with the same thought, the same appeal, the same emotional impetus."[156] Paley of CBS indicated that creating unity was an important task of radio: "It is worth noting, in passing, that all broadcasts which tend to develop in our nation a unity of national sense and feeling may be considered to have important educational value, whatever their subject."[157]

The presidential campaign of 1924 brought comparisons with the democratic institutions of Greece and Rome and the New England town meeting. In a 1924 article for Forum, Kaempffert suggested that with radio oratory might flourish again as it did in Greece and Rome: "What a success Demosthenes would have been in these days of broadcasting."[158] Kaempffert contended that radio would be the greatest unifying influence in the country since the invention of the railway and the telegraph and would surpass their influences:

> The telegraph and the telephone did much to weave us into a political and economic fabric, but a coarse fabric with wide meshes. How fine is the texture of the web that radio even now is spinning! It is achieving the task of making us feel together, think together, and live together.[159]

Eunice Fuller Bernard, in her 1924 analysis of "radio politics" in the New Republic, also chose a classical comparison for the possible effects of broadcasting:

> Potentially the radio gives every member of the electorate the possibility of a direct reaction to the candidates themselves. It does reproduce to some degree, for the first time in the United States, the conditions of the Athenian democracy where every voter, for himself, could hear and judge the candidates.[160]

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[156]Sarnoff 90.

[157]Paley 96.

[158]Kaempffert 768.

[159]Kaempffert 771-2.

[160]Bernard, "Radio Politics" 92.

Bernard noted that the chief advantage of the radio over the newspaper was its instantaneous transmission: "The listener can form his own opinion from the candidate's utterance, before the press or the parties can instruct him..."[161] The New York Times noted the changing communications environment its coverage, in April 1924, of an address by President Calvin Coolidge: "Probably never before has the voice of the head of a government been heard by so many people, for unprecedented steps were taken to broadcast Mr. Coolidge's speech as far as possible across the country."[162]

Bernard's views on the future of radio received a reply, in The New Republic, the next month from E. C. Lindeman, who countered optimistic predictions for radio with explanations of "radio fallacies." Lindeman noted high expectations for the cheap automobile, market reports via telegraph, the phonograph, and the cinema and predictions that the "radio is to solve the problem of prison morale, transform the American political mechanism into Athenian democracy, and become the handmaiden of internationalism."[163] Lindeman questioned the "fallacy" that improved communication results in improved human relations:

> Mere propinquity is not enough. The important factor in human communication is not contact but content. Conversation with another person may have little or no importance depending upon the content of the conversation. If the improved means of communication results in a mere extension of the area of gossip, accelerated gossiping is the result.[164]

Bernard responded to Lindeman in a letter to the editor of The New Republic in May and indicated that her intent in "Radio Politics" was not to comment on the quality of Athenian democracy: "What of course I intended and what I trust I conveyed to most readers was simply a statement of the physical fact that the potential ability of the individual voter to

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[161]Bernard, "Radio Politics" 92.

[162]"Coolidge for New Arms Conference, Heard by Vast Radio Audience," New York Times 23 Apr. 1924: 1.

[163]E. C. Lindeman, "Radio Fallacies," The New Republic 23 Apr. 1924: 227

[164]Lindeman 227.

hear the candidates' speeches for himself produced in the United States a condition paralleled, in that particular, the city-state of Athens."[165]

Edward Slosson, in the Independent, in 1923 noted the importance of the battle for control of the ether: "For the power that rules the wireless waves will shape the sentiments of the world. The invention of the radio has turned the nation into a town meeting."[166] In one of several collections of analyses of the social roles of broadcasting, Louis E. Kirstein in 1935 described radio as "an instrument of participating democracy."[167] Kirstein argued that radio had restored the role of the individual in the democratic process:

> The radio once again brought policy-making to the home and the groups around the stove in the general store, through issues of social welfare most directly affecting them. Once again intimacy was restored between a leader and people by the voice that told all about it (from the Capitol microphone instead of the Town Hall platform.)[168]

Kirstein acknowledged that actual participation of listeners was not possible but "at least the radio affords an opportunity to secure consent and approval."[169]

Sociologist Ernest W. Burgess in 1929 delineated both the challenges and the opportunities of media of mass communication. Burgess contended that while the development of new forms of transportation and communication had resulted in the decline of neighborhood and traditional influences, radio had provided a means for effective participation in public life: "Through these newer forms of communication the individual is participating imaginatively and actually more and more fully in 'the great society.'"[170]

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[165]Eunice Fuller Bernard, "Radio Fallacies," letter, The New Republic 24 May 1924: 313.

[166]Edward E. Slosson, "Voices in the Air," Independent 22 Apr. 1922: 385.

[167]Louis E. Kirstein, "Radio and the Social Welfare, " Radio: The Fifth Estate, ed. Herman S. Hettinger, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 177 (Philadelphia: AAPSS, 1935) 130.

[168]Kirstein 130-1.

[169]Kirstein 131.

[170]Ernest W. Burgess, "Communication," American Journal of Sociology 34 (1929): 1080.

By 1933, the full extent of the social transformations was under question. The President's Research Committee on Social Trends in 1933 noted the possible consequences of "media of mass impression":

> In short, an interconnecting, interconnected web of communication lines has been woven about the individual. It has transformed his behavior and his attitudes no less than it has transformed social organization itself. The web has developed largely without plan or aim. The integration has been in consequence of competitive forces, not social desirability. In this competition the destruction of old and established agencies is threatened.[171]

The commission's report indicated that the greatest challenge was the protection of the individual citizen since "mass impression on so vast a scale has never before been possible."[172]

In a 1935 collection of analyses of the social effects of radio, the volume's editor, Herman Hettinger, described broadcasting as the greatest instrument of mass communication since the invention of the printing press: "Potentially, in this country, it can bring together 50,000,000 citizens to listen to the voice of a speaker, or to a program."[173] Hettinger noted that the democratic nature of the US broadcasting system may have provided more entertainment than edification. He also noted the target market of broadcasting interests: "Radio's main interest is in the middle class, for it is this group, surveys show, that constitutes the most important and profitable market for the majority of advertised and branded commodities."[174]

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[171]President's Research Committee 217.

[172]President's Research Committee 215.

[173]Herman Hettinger, "Broadcasting in the United States," Radio: The Fifth Estate, ed. Herman S. Hettinger, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 177 (Philadelphia: AAPSS, 1935).

[174]Hettinger 12.

Dissent

Despite optimism for the social and political effects of broadcasting, one early commentator on the social effects of broadcasting argued that radio as a mass medium would have only limited social effects because of its isolating nature. Marshall D. Beuick wrote in Social Forces in 1927 that radio did not promote human congregation: "Man cannot satisfy his desire for association with others of whom he is conscious of being of the same kind; nor can he act in concert with other human beings through broadcasting."[175]

Despite optimism that radio would restore the democratic standards of a New England town meeting, Paul Lazarsfeld indicated in Radio and the Printed Page that radio probably would not have as much political effect in the United States because of its democratic institutions.[176] Lazarsfeld contended that radio might have more effect in totalitarian states because of the role that broadcasting could play in propaganda.

Commentators in the 1920s also expressed concern that the radio, movies, and romance magazines were introducing new patterns of behavior to what had been isolated groups.[177] Donald Young, in a 1926 analysis of information and entertainment media, noted that "they introduce and spread personal and social standards far beyond the reach of most of us."[178] Although Young criticized movies, radio provided the same exposure:

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[175]Marshall D. Beuick, "The Limited Social Effect of Radio Broadcasting," American Journal of Sociology 32 (1927): 621.

[176]Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Radio and the Printed Page: An Introduction to the Study of Radio and Its Role in the Communication of Ideas (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1940) 331.

[177]Paul L. Murphy, "Sources and Nature of Intolerance in the 1920s," Journal of American History 51.1 (1964): 69.

[178]Donald Young, "Social Standards and the Motion Picture," The Motion Picture in its Economic and Social Aspects, ed. Clyde L. King and Frank A. Tichenor, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 128 (Philadelphia: AAPSS, 1926) 147.

> Yet there are thousands of people in this country, old as well as young, who are consciously and unconsciously trying to live up to standards they have absorbed from other groups as seen in the movies, groups living under totally different conditions and with whom they could not successfully compete save by accident.[179]

Young called for a better educated audience and the inclusion of social values in entertainment fare.

Armstrong Perry, the counsel to the National Committee on Education by Radio, in 1935, challenged the US system of broadcasting and its values.

> (C)ommercial broadcasting has been developed, under the American system, like a medicine show, using amusements to attract attention in order to sell goods. The truth of this is obvious, and the United States is the only well-developed country in the world whose broadcasting system has any such basis. All others recognize broadcasting as too important and efficient an instrument of education and culture to be devoted primarily to amusement and advertising.[180]

Perry challenged contentions that the US system of broadcasting promoted free speech, fair competition, and the public interest. Young saw little hope for reform:

> There are many who maintain that the American system should be continued, in spite of its weaknesses, and that the results can be improved. There are many others who believe that broadcasting is too important to be turned over to the 'show business.' To such people radio is one of the great influences that will make or break our civilization. They feel sure that no amount of reform can convert a business dedicated to the motives of private profit into a satisfactory vehicle for the promotion of the public benefit.[181]

Evaluative Framework

The decade of the 1920s when radio evolved from a novelty to a mainstay of American life was a period of social disorganization. The country, isolationist in foreign affairs, was restrictive in immigration and divided domestically, between the "wets" and

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[179]Young 147.

[180]Armstrong Perry, "Weak Spots in the American System of Broadcasting," Radio: The Fifth Estate, ed. Herman S. Hettinger, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 177 (Philadelphia: AAPSS, 1935) 26.

[181]Perry 28.

"drys," between the old stock and the new stock of Americans, and between blacks and whites. Walter Lippmann, in 1927, described a nation set against itself:

> Prohibition, the Ku Klux Klan, Fundamentalism, and xenophobia are an extreme but authentic expression of the politics, the social outlook, the religion of the older American village civilization making its last stand against what looks like an alien invasion. The alien invasion is in fact the new America produced by the growth and prosperity of America.[182]

Broadcasting brought into this mix the opportunity for simultaneous transmission and receipt of messages. While Marshall D. Beuick warned that broadcasting would isolate individuals and E. C. Lindeman argued that efficacy of transmission of information does not guarantee good human relations, broadcasting became a tool for unity, if not for the entire nation.

William McDougall, for one, argued that preservation of the "nation" required defenses against contrary ideas. Leonard J. Moore, in a more recent analysis, contended that the Ku Klux Klan represented the alienation not only between white middle-class Protestants and "others" but also between these mainstream Americans and their political and economic leaders.[183] The Klan was as much a populist movement as a racist and xenophobic movement. In regard to the Klan's views on "others," the organization did not seem far removed from the mainstream of US life that supported the restriction of immigration and segregation of blacks.

What was to save the nation? Efforts to exclude seemed to overwhelm the expectations of inclusion that some radio supporters promoted. If alienation existed between the white, Protestant middle-class establishment and its political and economic leadership, then the democratic hopes for radio may make more sense since the political mainstream did not seem to be reaching out to marginal groups. Although Harold Lasswell

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[182]Walter Lippmann, "The Causes of Political Indifference Today," Atlantic Monthly Feb. 1927: 265-6.

[183]Moore 352-3.

in 1941 extolled the interaction between public opinion and policy-making in a democracy, he left unclear the role that mass communication can play. Lasswell noted "a vital two-way communication between government and public in a democracy," but acknowledged that modern media of mass communication provide one-way communication.[184]

Arguments for the participatory idea of mass communication, particularly for politics, would seem to stem from the numerous alienations of the day. The intent did not seem to be to join the "wets" and the "drys" or the Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, and certainly not whites and blacks, but rather to reassure members of the white, Protestant, middle class that an opportunity might again exist for their full participation in their governance. Broadcasting did not offer a universal blanket for all Americans but rather a wrap for those who suddenly faced the prospect of no longer being in control because of changes in population. Participation was important because alienation was rampant.

Dislocations

The Twenties ended with the Great Depression that brought a commonality of misery and purpose. The Depression ended with World War II that also brought a common purpose. By the time the nation again caught its breath, the dislocations of World War II were creating new social dislocations, and television was beginning to develop a national audience.

In his presidential address to the American Sociological Society in 1947, Louis Wirth called on his colleagues to make the creation of consensus on an international scale the primary subject of the discipline of sociology or face the possibility of not having the capability to study any subjects. Wirth said the only defense against totalitarian challenges such as the world had faced during World War II and against the destructive potential of the

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184Harold D. Lasswell, Democracy Through Public Opinion (New York: Banta, 1941) 15.

atomic bomb was a world consensus. He emphasized the importance of mass communication in providing that defense:

> Since the mass media of communication are capable of providing the picture of social reality and the symbolic framework of thought and fantasy and the incentives for human action on a massive scale, the knowledge of their effective use should become the most important quest of social science and particularly of sociology.[185]

Wirth told his colleagues that mass communication "is rapidly becoming, if it is not already, the main framework of the web of social life."[186]

Constitutional scholar Alexander Meiklejohn in 1948 took a somewhat different tack in his analysis of the effects of radio, a principal medium of mass communication. Meiklejohn decried the commercial nature of radio and the lost opportunity for development of consensus: "The radio, as we now have it is not cultivating those qualities of taste, of reasoned judgment, of integrity, of loyalty, of mutual understanding upon which the enterprise of self-government begins. On the contrary, it is a mighty force for breaking them down."[187]

By 1948, Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton were contending that broadcasting had become a detriment to individual participation in social and political affairs. Although mass communication provided a flood of information, attention to it provided less time for action about issues of interest. The process of participation also had become vicarious. Lazarsfeld and Merton indicated that the consumer of mass communication "comes to mistake knowing about problems of the day for doing something about them."[188] During

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[185]Louis Wirth, "Consensus and Mass Communication," American Sociological Review 13 (1948): 15.

[186]Wirth 10.

[187]Alexander Meiklejohn, Political Freedom: The Constitutional Powers of the People (New York: Harper, 1948) 87.

[188]Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton, "Mass Communication, Popular Taste, and Organized Social Action," Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America, ed. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1957) 464.

that year, however, mass communication entered a new era with the beginning of a full television season of programming.

Television would add pictures to radio's simultaneous transmissions of sounds and further bring into question the role of mass communication as an opportunity for consensus or as a cause of further individual isolation and social disorganization. Mass communication would reach its zenith in the 1960s and 1970s as more than 90% of the America public would watch similar programming on ABC, CBS, and NBC and sometimes the same event, the death of a president, for example.[189] In the same period, expectations arose about the social benefits of another communications medium, cable television, whose programming capacity would create a television of abundance rather than the scarcity of broadcasting. Cable television also promised to advance a new communications revolution with capabilities for narrowcasting and two-way transmission of information. The next chapter examines evolution of the participatory idea of mass communication with the full penetration of television and expectations that cable television would extend the social role of mass media. Of particular interest is the role of these expectations in debates about regulation of cable television and its expansion in the nation's one-hundred largest television markets.

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[189] Carey, "Democracy" 10.

CHAPTER 5
THE IDEA: EVOLUTION THROUGH THE 1970S

Introduction

After the Great Depression and World War II, the United States entered the jet age, the atomic age, and the age of television. The country experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity in the 1950s and 1960s. The gross national product increased, in constant dollars, from $323.5 billion in 1949 to $730.4 billion in 1969.[1] Economic prosperity and GI loans helped to bring the rise of suburbia, and GI loans also provided an increasing number of men with opportunities for college education. Post-war prosperity may have sown the seeds for youthful rebellion,[2] created expectations that all sectors of society would receive greater material benefits,[3] and put the United States in a disadvantageous economic position with nations that it had helped to recover from the devastation of World War II.[4] Post-war prosperity brought calls for greater participation from marginal groups. The Supreme Court's unanimous decision in Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 to end school segregation and the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott in

[1]Edward F. Denison, Accounting for United States Economic Growth, 1929-1969 (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1973) 153.

[2]Daniel Yankelovich, New Rules: Searching for Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down (New York: Random House, 1981) 23.

[3]Richard Maltby, Harmless Entertainment: Hollywood and the Ideology of Consensus (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1983) 184.

[4]Ian I. Mitroff and Warren Bennis, The Unreality Industry: The Deliberate Manufacturing of Falsehoods and What It Is Doing to Our Lives (New York: Birch Lane, 1989)27.

1955 and 1956 propelled the Southern civil rights movement into a national examination of social, political, and economic roles of minorities and women. Although women returned from their World War II jobs to their homes immediately after declarations of peace, tension began to build for larger economic and political roles for women. The end of the war also brought a population surge that continues to affect the nation's demographics as "Baby Boomers" move through life's phases. The nation's population increased by approximately 18 million in the 1940s and approximately 30 million in the 1950s.[5]

The aftermath of World War II also brought new international tensions as the Soviet Union consolidated its war gains to take control of most of Eastern Europe. Chinese Communists succeeded in their civil war against Nationalist forces, and the United States, under the flag of the United Nations, battled communism on the Korean peninsula. In 1954, communist forces, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, defeated the French in Indochina to set the stage for eventual US military action in Southeast Asia. The threat of communism permeated domestic politics in the early 1950s as McCarthyism became an epithet against blacklisting and guilt by association.

Domestic politics also moved from stability to frequent transition in the White House. Presidential turnover in the United State reached the highest level since the 1840s. From 1933 until 1961, three men had served as president including Franklin Roosevelt's unprecedented election to four terms. Between 1961 and 1981, five men would hold the office. No president would serve two full terms with Kennedy's assassination, Richard Nixon's resignation in the wake of the Watergate investigation, and Gerald Ford's failure to win election to a full term. Opposition to the Vietnam War brought Lyndon Johnson's decision not to seek election to a second full term, and the Iran-hostage crisis contributed to Jimmy Carter's defeat in 1980 after one term.

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[5]Economic Growth in the 1960s: Prerequisites, Potentials, Problems (New York: National Industrial Conference Board, 1960) 6.

Social movements evolved from the civil unrest of the 1960s and 1970s to the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s. In the twenty years between the days that John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan took their presidential oaths of office, the United States underwent a series of transformations in politics, culture, economy, social life, and communication. Kennedy's assassination, the civil rights and women's rights movements, the Vietnam war and its opposition, Watergate, and rising environmental concerns helped to define at least one generation of Americans. Some have described the 1960s and the 1970s as a time of youthful idealism and alienation. Under siege were middle-class values after decades of post-war prosperity. Middle-class young people were "dropping out" at a time that marginal groups, including blacks, women, and Latinos, were seeking a greater stake in the mainstream. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s civil rights campaign evolved from opposition to racial discrimination to a challenge to middle-class values, including the conduct of the Vietnam War.[6] Consumer and environmental movement were challenges to perceived dominant values of waste and exploitation.

The Arab oil embargo in 1973 helped to jolt the United States into the global economy and to end a period of unprecedented growth and prosperity in the United States.[7] Watergate, which culminated with the resignation of Richard Nixon in 1974, also provided a challenge to middle-class norms. The Ford caretaker government and the Carter presidency failed to ameliorate a move to the political right after decades of the "New Frontier" and the "The Great Society." Reagan represented a return to values of individual

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[6]King aide Andrew Young indicated in 1970 that a key issue had become the role of blacks in the middle class. Young said the older civil rights groups such as the NAACP and the National Urban League had tried to be middle class without full evaluation of what that meant: "[T]here was never any judgment on the middle class white American culture. We saw our role as different. We saw white middle class culture as overwhelmingly racist, materialistic, and militaristic. While we were integrationists in the sense that we saw ourselves involved in the society with them, we were never trying to be like them." Andrew Young, 18 June 1970, Oral History Collection, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Austin, TX (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984).

[7]Mitroff and Bennis 27.

responsibility and a diminishing of the role of government in providing the social good.

This chapter will examine the evolution of the participatory idea of mass communication in the 1960s and 1970s as television became the dominant mass medium with penetration into more than 90% percent of US homes. In the post-war era, the notion of mass communication as a cohesive force faced challenges from the theory of mass society and related contentions that mass communication, particularly television, was exacerbating social atomization and promoting interest in the individual good rather than the common good. The nearly total penetration of television into US homes did not result in an abatement of social divisions. One factor in these divisions, some critics charged, was the commercial nature of US broadcasting. Also at play were efforts of marginal groups to move into the mainstream and contentions of a loss of common vision. At issue, for some, was whether the common vision that faced challenges was inclusive of US society or merely represented efforts to maintain traditional middle-class values of exclusion (See Chapter 4).

With the social conflicts of the civil rights movement and the youth rebellion, which included the anti-war movement, one proposed solution to social problems was even more mass communication with the further development and penetration of cable television. Optimism for cable television also reflected the view, of the era, that technology could ameliorate social ills. Cable television offered more channel capacity as well as the possibility of narrowcasting and two-way transmission of services. The Federal Communications Commission also had attempted to increase channel capacity through provision of UHF channels. Public discourse about cable policy in the early 1970s dealt almost exclusively with its effects on social conditions and on furthering a "communications revolution" rather than the economic benefits of cable expansion for system providers.[8] This chapter also will examine the public discourse of this policy-

[8]Thomas Streeter, "The Cable Fable Revisited: Discourse, Policy, and the Making of Cable Television," Critical Studies in Mass Communication 4 (1987): 174-200.

making. The Federal Communications Commission's Third Report and Order in 1972 allowed the further development of cable television as a mass medium and held the promise of a new communications medium that would allow the "narrowcasting" of programming to target groups and the media empowerment of individuals.

While the advancement of cable television penetration furthered the role of the medium as mass communication, promotion of two-way cable television services and development of videotex and teletext systems in Europe in the 1970s also set the stage for a wave of interactive enthusiasm in the United States. This enthusiasm continued through the early 1980s until the first commercial two-way cable television system, Qube, ceased service, and newspaper chains ended their videotex experiments in Florida and California. The next chapter will examine the early promise of interactive communication and its effects on the participatory idea of mass communication.

Dominant Medium

Construction of mass communication as a participatory process may have reached its zenith with the nearly complete penetration of television in the United States. Broadcast historian Erik Barnouw by 1975 had found that television had exceeded expectations in its pervasiveness but the situation was not necessarily positive:

> On the whole, television has won a degree of acceptance that must have exceeded the dreams of a (NBC executive David) Sarnoff. For most people it had become their window on the world. The view it offered seemed to be the world. They trusted its validity and completeness. The trust could be pointed to with pride by the industry, but was itself a danger. It made possible, as events had suggested, national adventures in deception and self-deception. But television itself did not warn of the danger, and so the trust remained – and with it, the danger.[9]

By the 1960s, most families had a television set, and "the president could reach into almost every household in America to command the attention and manipulate national

[9]Erik Barnouw, Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television (New York: Basic Books, 1976) 339.

symbols."[10] Newspapers had remained for Americans the principal and most credible source of news with the most comprehensive coverage as the 1960s began, but by 1970, "television had become the unambiguous leader on all three counts."[11] Marshall McLuhan predicted that the electronic media would transform a print-dominated world, but, in the 1960s, coverage of McLuhan dominated the print media.[12] Hugh Kenner described the McLuhan phenomenon:

> Marshall McLuhan's name flies about these days the way 'Technocracy' did in the Thirties: a picture story in Life; status as resident sage in the files from which they confect the Time Essay; random allusions in the columns of every journal one picks up, from National Review to the National Catholic Reporter, not to mention Encounter, Popular Photography, and the Times Lit. Sup.[13]

Television sets in use increased from 10,000 in 1946 to 10.5 million in 1950, and by 1960, the estimated number of sets in use "had increased fivefold to 54 million."[14] The three dominant television networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, shared an audience of more than 90% of US homes by 1976. By the 1990s, the percentage of prime-time network audience share had fallen to the high 60s with competition from cable, independent television stations, and VCRs.[15]

The participatory idea of mass communication faced its greatest affirmation but its greatest challenges in the 1950s and 1960s. Television gained domination as a mass

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[10]David M. Chalmers, And the Crooked Place Made Straight: The Struggle for Social Change in the 1960s (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1991) 114.

[11]George Comstock, Steven Chaffee, Nathan Katzman, Maxwell McCombs, and Donald Roberts, Television and Human Behavior (New York: Columbia UP, 1978) 8.

[12]*See* Harry H. Crosby and George R. Bond, The McLuhan Explosion (New York: American Book Co., 1968); Sidney Finkelstein, Sense and Nonsense of McLuhan (New York, International Publishers, 1968); Raymond Rosenthal, ed., McLuhan: Pro & Con (New York: Funk & Wagnells, 1968).

[13]Hugh Kenner, "Understanding McLuhan," McLuhan: Pro & Con, ed. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Funk & Wagnells, 1968) 23.

[14]George Comstock and Haejung Paik, Television and the American Child (San Diego: Academic P, 1991) ix.

[15]Comstock and Paik x.

medium, but analyses of its societal efforts were contraposed. Divisive social and political turmoil was occurring at the same time that mass media and specifically television were providing the largest common audiences for public affairs in US history.[16] Joseph T. Klapper, in 1960, contended that mass communication had limited effects on its audiences since "persuasive mass communication functions far more frequently as an agent of reinforcement than as an agent of change."[17] The cohesive viewpoint of mass communication was that television was bringing people together in an almost religious solidarity as well as eliminating regional and other social barriers. The divisive viewpoint was that television was, if not exploiting an atomized populace, at least pitting individuals against each other in a search for social identity.

Cohesive Force

Newspaper and magazine columnist Robert J. Samuelson, who covered cable television policy debates in the 1970s, noted in 1991 that although the dominance of the three television networks in the 1960s and 1970s never did consistently provide quality programming, "it did give us something that's now slipping away: shared experience and a sense of community."[18] Federal Communications Commissioner Lee Loevinger, in 1968, contended that the primary mission for broadcasting was the promotion of national unity:

> The creation of a common national culture embodying a spirit of national unity must surely rank as a foremost need of the present era. Of course, national unity does not require or imply unanimity of views on all issues or suppression of dissent. It

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[16]Wilbur Schramm, "Communication in Crisis," The Kennedy Assassination and the American Public: Social Communication in Crisis, ed. Bradley S. Greenberg and Edwin B. Parker (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1965) 4.

[17]Joseph T. Klapper, The Effects of Mass Communication (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960) 15.

[18]Robert J. Samuelson, "To Each His Own," Across the Board Dec. 1991: 14.

> does imply a common bond or mood as well as agreement on some basic ideas and principles.[19]

Supporters of the cohesive effects of television indicate that the effect was almost religious in nature, particularly with the death of a president. The pervasiveness of television and its ability to present simultaneous sights and sounds to its audiences had become clear to the nation on November 22, 1963. Wilbur Schramm in 1965 described the television coverage of the Kennedy assassination and funeral as an unprecedented sharing of a national event:

> For all practical purposes there was no other news story in American during those four days, and all the mass media concentrated on telling it. There were times during those days when a majority of all Americans apparently were looking at the same events and hearing the same words from their television sets – participating together, at least to an extent, in great national event. Nothing like this on such a scale had ever occurred before.[20]

Schramm viewed the sharing of events as helpful in dealing with the loss of a president and the resulting political transition – a part of the national grieving process. The sharing of the event also may have provided "a reassertion of national norms."[21] Kennedy's assassination and funeral became representative of the construction of the cohesive role of television. Ken Auletta, who in 1991 tracked the corporate takeovers of ABC, NBC, and CBS in Three Blind Mice, found provision of a participatory experience, with religious connotations, as a saving grace of the networks:

> Whatever its failings, a mass medium creates a sense of community. Americans grew up believing diversity is good and bigness is bad, which is often true. But it is also true that the public has an investment in a common communications system, in the larger public purpose a network can perform when it brings a disparate nation together to share an experience. Often this potential is unrealized. But it was

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[19]Lee Loevinger, "The Ambiguous Mirror: The Reflective-Projective Theory of Broadcasting and Mass Communications," Journal of Broadcasting 12 (1968): 113.

[20]Schramm 4.

[21]Schramm 24.

fulfilled when the networks became the nation's common church after John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., were assassinated..."[22]

Brenda Maddox in 1972 described "an almost religious faith" in cable television as a mass medium that had united disparate groups in the United States. Maddox noted the optimism about cable services: "The faith is religious in that it begins with something that was once despised – a crude makeshift way of bringing television to remote areas – and sees it transformed over the opposition of powerful enemies into the cure for the ills of modern urban American society."[23] Thus television may be an active part of what N. Robert Bellah in 1967 described as the civil religion. Bellah, as Auletta, saw the religious connotations of the Kennedy death and funeral: "Just three years ago we participated in a vivid re-enactment of the sacrifice theme in connection with the funeral of our assassinated president."[24]

While in pre-modern societies, religion conveyed shared meanings and values, religion's role as a conduit of values has not ceased with advances in technology.[25] Researchers and scholars have indicated that television has served as a transmitter of traditional religious values and as a factor in alternatives to traditional religions. Gary W. Selnow, in a 1986 study of values in prime-time television, found that while all mass media produce ideals, television because of its pervasiveness, reinforces ideals "with greater power and consistency." These ideals even include religious values: "In a subtle way, without explicitly articulating religious doctrine, prime-time television programs incorporate

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[22]Ken Auletta, Three Blind Mice: How the TV Networks Lost Their Way (New York: Random House, 1991) 570.

[23]Brenda Maddox, Beyond Babel: New Directions in Communications (New York: Simon, 1972) 145.

[24]Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," Daedalus 96 (1967): 13.

[25]Yankelovich 217.

the principles that have, over time, served the church, and, by extension, the state in engineering conformity to and acceptance of the larger cultural system."[26]

Despite criticism of sex and violence in television prime-time series, Selnow found that "the medium is demonstrating a wide-ranging set of positive personal values. Viewers see entire programs, not just controversial programs."[27] Selnow's research indicated that "television script writers rarely stray from a few narrow themes that have been espoused by mainstream religious cultures and over the centuries have been woven inextricably into the American moral fabric."[28]

While television may transmit religious and moral values, it also may substitute for such values. George Comstock in 1980 noted that television particularly resembled religion because the basis of its power is the intended audience's acceptance of its messages: "Television also appears to resemble religion in the communication of values and interpretation of the world. Television does not do so explicitly as does religion (except in religious and other exhortatory programming), but implicitly."[29]

James Chesebro in 1991 extended to seventeen years his study of social values represented in prime-time television series. Chesebro found that since 1975, 75% of all series have promoted the same two values, authority and idealism:

> The repetition of these same values from season to season and from series to series – particularly when placed in elegantly produced settings and as enacted by actors and actresses who have already captured the public's imagination – is likely to have its influence, if not overtly change the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of viewers.[30]

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[26]Gary W. Selnow, "Values in Prime-Time Television," Journal of Communication 40.2 (1990): 71.

[27]Selnow, "Values" 72.

[28]Gary W. Selnow, "Solving Problems on Prime-Time Television," Journal of Communication 36.2 (1986): 71.

[29]George Comstock, Television in America (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980) 140.

[30]James W. Chesebro, "Communication, Values, and Popular Television Series: A Seventeen-Year Assessment," Communication Quarterly 39 (1991) 219.

Jib Fowles in a 1992 reappraisal of television effects viewed the medium as a sufficient force for social cohesion in the country:

> All Americans are aware of the same mediated figures, the same national issues, the same products, the same lessons in behavior and values, the same language usage, the same dress styles, the same sense of tempo and on and on, endlessly, through the myriad aspects of what constitutes a culture. As individuals they may not embrace all or any of these features: familiarity – having seen it on television – is sufficient for social cohesion.[31]

Linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky in 1986 spoke more disparagingly of a state religion that included the mass media and compared it to the notion of propaganda:

> The process of creating and entrenching highly restrictive, reshaped, or completely fabricated memories of the past is what we call 'indoctrination' or 'propaganda' when it is conducted by official enemies and 'education,' 'moral instruction,' or 'character building' when we do it ourselves. It is a valuable mechanism of control, since it effectively blocks any understanding of what is happening in the world.[32]

Some claims for the cohesive force of television had not used a religious metaphor. Analysts indicated that television as a cohesive force had begun to remove the fragmentary barriers of the print media,[33] provided political education for many citizens,[34] and facilitated ongoing technological changes.[35] Barry N. Schwartz in 1973 argued that the new media, in which he included television, tended to promote group processes and "lead us away from the fragmentation of unshakable individualism and collective mechanism."[36]

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[31]Jib Fowles, Why Viewers Watch: A Reappraisal of Television's Effects (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992) 245.

[32]Norm Chomsky, The Manufacture of Consent (Minneapolis, MN: Silha Center, 1986) 4-5.

[33]Barry N. Schwartz, ed., Human Connection and the New Media (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973) 3.

[34]Doris A. Graber, Mass Media and American Politics, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly P, 1989) 153.

[35]James R. Beniger, The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1986).

[36]Schwartz 3.

Doris Graber in 1989 contended that television's political impact is the result of the "shared experience" that the medium has provided:

> Much of what the average person learns about political norms, rules, values, and events and about the way people cope with these political happenings, comes of necessity from the mass media. Those with the widest exposure to political news in the mass media generally are most aware of political issues and have more opinions about them.[37]

James Beniger's Control Revolution in 1986 also provided reinforcement of the view of mass communication as a cohesive force in society but in the context that social controls as the mass media replaced the controls of interpersonal relationships.[38]

Simultaneous Effects

Some scholars have found that social cohesion is among several simultaneous effects of mass communication. Denis McQuail in 1969 contrasted the view of the cohesive role of communication in society with a social disorganization more related to social pathology, a cataloging of social ills. Mass media can offer models of behavior, teach social roles, provide vicarious experience of novel situations and help audience members adjust to the expectations of others. "Those sociologists who have examined the value patterns expressed in mass media content have tended to conclude that dominant social values are reinforced and deviant or disruptive elements are sifted out."[39] McQuail indicated that an opposing view of mass media provides a more common view of social disorganization among sociologists and the public. "The mass media are seen to contribute to rootlessness and isolation in an urban environment, creating an illusion of involvement in a complex society and restricting general participation."[40]

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[37]Graber 153.

[38]Beniger 7.

[39]Denis McQuail, Towards a Sociology of Mass Communications (London: Collier Macmillian, 1969) 14-15).

[40]McQuail 15.

George Comstock in 1980 defined a television event as "the conjunction of an actual event, television coverage, and a typically constituted portion of the potential audience."[41] Comstock contended that the effects of such television events can take diverse directions:

> In the case of the political conventions, the attention of television has changed the event itself. Television in this instance meddles with the symbols of history. In the case of moon landings, television contributes to a common experience on which the whole society will draw for years to come, as it does so often in its everyday programming. In the case of certain other events, television presents an event that appeals disproportionately to certain segment of the audience, as the diplomatic adventure in Jerusalem undoubtedly did to the Jewish community. In these cases, television takes on the less typical role of cultivating cultural variation and differences within the larger society.[42]

Changes in US society during the 1960s and 1970s may have brought individual isolation and resulted in "individuals' inability to identify and experience their community," but William J. Donnelly in 1986 indicated that the effects had not been worse because of the cohesive role of mass communication:

> For all the ability of individuals to pick and choose among communication products and to interpret these products in individual ways, the fact remains that broadcast television's ability to reach everyone and satisfy everyone has enabled society to maintain something of a common experience and a common agenda. It has proven to be a strong connective tissue of the body politic.[43]

Even television coverage of the civil rights confrontations in Selma and Birmingham and of Vietnam War battles and protests brought a sense of cohesion to some Americans, Martin Slann and Susan Duffy contended in 1990. Slann and Duffy argued that television is the single most influential factor that affects "the perceptions that

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[41]Comstock 38.

[42]Comstock 28.

[43]William J. Donnelly, Confetti Generation: How the New Communications Technology Is Fragmenting America (New York: Holt, 1986) 179.

Americans have of our leaders and our political process."[44] They said television coverage of the Vietnam War had brought the media a role as "the nation's conscience."[45]

Divisive Force

Those who viewed mass communication, including television, as a divisive force in society have questioned its role in the creation of mass society, the effects of "overcommunication" on individuals, its promotion of self-fulfillment over promotion of a common good, and its promotion of "unreality," the exclusion of first-hand reality. Of specific interest was why during a period of unprecedented exposure through television to common meanings and shared values social and political divisions resulted in the greatest collapse of consensus, opposition to the Vietnam War, in the United States since the Civil War[46] and whether the apparent loss of consensus was a short-term result of changes in technology including mass-media technology. Reviews in 1965 of opinion polls and other data found that people were satisfied with national political and economic conditions between 1938 and 1965 with "an increase in commitment to values and norms sustaining tolerance, free speech, and participation in the democratic political system."[47] From 1965 to the early seventies these indicators declined rapidly. In 1979, Seymour Martin Lipset observed: "The reaction to the Vietnam War followed by Watergate and the revelations of various security agencies, in the latter years of the period, and economic recession brought about a steady reduction in confidence in the American polity and increased intolerance."[48]

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[44]Martin Slann and Susan Duffy, ed., Morality and Conviction in American Politics: A Reader (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 17.

[45]Slann and Duffy 17.

[46]Maltby 185.

[47]Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Limits to Futurology and Social Science Analysis," The Third Century: America as Post-Industrial Society, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution P. 1979) 16.

[48]Lipset 17.

Mass Society

New studies of social divisions in Western countries had begun as a result of the rise of totalitarian states in Russia and Germany. Interest in the mob mind or herd instinct (See Chapter 4) evolved in the 1950s into explications of the theory of mass society.[49] Emil Lederer and Hannah Arendt characterized mass society as the loss of class awareness.[50] Rootless individuals had been at the mercy of totalitarian regimes after they had lost the social bonds that had kept them together as a class.

In a similar vein, David Riesman in 1950 depicted the "lonely crowd" as individuals who depended upon external influences to identify themselves.[51] He contrasted those who were tradition-bound, in primitive cultures with external values, and those who were inner-directed, who had internalized the values of the primary group.[52] Riesman saw the mass media as purveyor of influences by which the other-directed defined themselves.[53] In 1951, C. Wright Mills contended that the mass media had played a major role in the political indifference of the middle class and were "a scheme for pre-scheduled, mass emotions."[54] The mass media provided both models for behavior and an escape from

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[49]Edward Shils, Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1975) 91-107.

[50]Emil Lederer, State of the Masses: The Threat of the Classless Society (New York Norton, 1940) 107; Hannah Arendt, Origins of Totalitariansm (New York: Harcourt, 1951) 305.

[51]David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character (New Haven: Yale UP, 1950) 22.

[52]Riesman 11-17.

[53]Riesman 21-2.

[54]C. Wright Mills, White Collar: The American Middle Class (New York: Oxford UP, 1951) 333.

matters of greater consequence.[55] Mills noted that the emphasis of mass media content also was on the detached individual and not collective action:

> Whatever is done is done by individual effort, and if a group is involved, it strings along after the extraordinary leader. There is displayed no upward climb of and by collective action to political goals, but individuals succeeding, by strictly personal efforts in a hostile environment, to personal economic and erotic goals.[56]

"Overcommunication"

Although historian Daniel J. Boorstin in 1973 noted a direct correlation between the rise of communication and the rise of civilization, he noted that democracy requires "the faith that sharing the good things of life – and especially the power to govern – can be wholesome." [57] Boorstin expressed concern that the United States was facing a problem of "overcommunication" and communication that was divisive rather than cohesive: "To catch and hold our attention, the image must be in motion. So it is not surprising that more and more of what is communicated to us is explosive and disruptive, interrupting the current of our experience."[58] Boorstin also expressed concern that the United States had lost its sense of history.[59] Development of the mass media had provided centralized sources of information, but centralization also had isolated the consumer. "One of the prices paid was the decline of congregation – congregation being the drawing together of people where they could enjoy and react to and respond to the reaction and feelings of their fellows."[60]

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[55]Mills 335

[56]Mills 336-7.

[57]Daniel Boorstin, Democracy and Its Discontents: Reflections on Everyday Life (New York: Random House, 1974) 4.

[58]Boorstin 10.

[59]Boorstin 46.

[60]Boorstin 114.

Ralph Lowenstein and John Merrill in 1990 also warned of the dangers of "overcommunication." Lowenstein and Merrill indicated that the "geometric" increase in mass media messages with the rising dominance of television since the 1950s had created a problem of US society:

> The entire social and intellectual environment may well be undergoing a communication pollution that will threaten our social fabric with chaos and frustration and disrupt the functioning of our interpersonal civilizing ecology. For the more communications we receive, the less each is taken seriously. In a sense, we are experiencing a period of communication inflation in which messages become 'cheaper' (of less value) as they become more numerous.[61]

Self-fulfillment

Stanley Rothman in 1979 also found that the mass media in the 1960s had been a divisive factor in US society with the emergence of a self-indulgent counterculture. "To be sure the emergence of the counter-culture and its ability to obtain publicity had other sources, but television and the print media did provide important support."[62] Rothman contended that the mass media generally have worsened feelings of discontent throughout US society:

> They have made various strata more aware of the issues that divide them; they have weakened traditional sources of political and social authority including political parties; they have made it possible to mobilize relatively small groups in the population that can secure their ends in the face of a larger but more parochial majority.[63]

Narcissism rather than the common good had become the concern of Americans, Christopher Lasch indicated in 1979. Lasch agreed with Boorstin that the United States had lost its sense of history: "To live for the moment is the prevailing passion – to live for

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[61]Ralph L. Lowenstein and John C. Merrill, Macromedia: Mission, Message, and Morality (New York: Longman, 1990) 4.

[62]Stanley Rothman, "The Mass Media in Post-Industrial America," The Third Century: America as Post-Industrial Society, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution P, 1979) 383.

[63]Rothman 387.

yourself, not for your predecessors or posterity. We are fast losing the sense of historical continuity, the sense of belonging to a succession of generations originating in the past and stretching into the future."[64] Lasch contended that goals had become not personal salvation or even restoration of an earlier golden age but "the momentary illusion of personal well-being, health, and psychic security."[65] Even the radicalism of the 1960s had elements of therapy: "Radical politics filled empty lives, provided a sense of meaning and purpose."[66] Lasch faulted the mass media for their cult of celebrity and their attempt to surround it with glamour and excitement: "The media give substance to identify with the stars and to hate the 'herd,' and make it more and more difficult for him to accept the banality of everyday existence."[67]

Pollster Daniel Yankelovich noted in 1981 that participants in the "sixties revolution" found it difficult to believe that shifts in cultures had "barely touched the lives of a majority of Americans."[68] Yankelovich also contended that a more fundamental change had occurred in the United States based more on personal fulfillment and self-expression:

> By the seventies, however, most Americans were involved in projects to prove that life can be more than a grim economic chore. Americans from every walk of life were suddenly eager to give more meaning to their lives, to find fuller self-expression and to add a touch of adventure and grace to their lives and those of others.[69]

Economic growth and affluence in the post-war United States helped to create cohesiveness and "and from the late forties well into the sixties most Americans shared a vision of what

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[64]Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations (New York: Norton, 1978) 5.

[65]Lasch 7.

[66]Lasch 7.

[67]Lasch 21.

[68]Yankelovich 4.

[69]Yankelovich 4.

they wanted for their lives, their families, and their countries."[70] Contributions to this affluence were technological advances and cheap energy. Yankelovich contended that the rising interest in self-expression and self-fulfillment eventually came into conflict with shared values of the past:

> It is useful to remember that the search for self-fulfillment began in the economic climate of the 1960s and among a group – college students from affluent families – not notorious for economic realism. Perhaps it made sense at one time to assume our economic system was so well-heeled that everything was possible at once – high growth in a clean, safe environment, with social justice for all and life replete with leisure, jet travel, second homes, glowing health, and other 'simple things' of life.[71]

Yankelovich noted while the transition of profit-making from immoral to ethically worthy took several centuries to complete, the shift from self-denial to duty to self has taken place within "our lifetime, as have the great changes in sexual morality, attitudes toward credit and indebtedness, and toward women outside the home, divorce, abortion, and so on."[72] While in traditional societies, religion conveyed shared meanings and values, and in the 1950s social consensus carried weight, the more recent situation has been "a cultural tug-of-war" between the part of the American public that continues to adhere to the old rules, and the part that embraces its free-to-be-me opposite, with the majority in the middle, picking and choosing from both sides."[73] If, as Yankelovich indicated, this transition in US culture resulted in social divisiveness, William J. Donnelly contended television was a principal culprit in such a transition:

> The thread of social character that we have been pursuing suggests that the seeds of self-concentration were rooted in other-direction and the pace, pervasiveness, and panic of the experience of other-direction were supported by television technology, with its inherent, kinetic multiplicity of images of behavior. It simply could not have happened in the same way without television. The existential psychologists

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[70]Yankelovich 21.

[71]Yankelovich 23.

[72]Yankelovich 247.

[73]Yankelovich 247.

> gave a supportive, shaping voice to the predictable anxiety while framing the widely accepted solution of self-actualization.[74]

Rise of Unreality

Some of the sharper criticism of the effects of mass communication and specifically television have dealt with the departure from "reality" that results from decreased human interaction. Franco Ferrarotti in 1988 mourned the "end of conversation" and the loss of interpersonal communication. Ferrarotti found no cohesive role for mass communication. "The mass media do not mediate. They restrict themselves to telling about themselves. They are the origin of the sense of unreality and the process of de-realization that mark modern societies in their high points, they meet and mix a highly rigorous technical rationality and basis absurdity."[75]

Ian I. Mitroff and Warren Bennis in 1989 attributed social problems in the United States to an "unreality industry" that the mass media have engendered, particularly since the end of World War II. The unprecedented affluence of the post-war era, however, was as responsible for the growth of unreality as the rise of television and other advances in communications technology:

> Ironically, it was not the initial failure of the American experiment itself that led to the difficulties that the US is currently experiencing. Rather, it was America's huge, unparalleled successes. Or more precisely, it was the country's enormous failure as a culture to understand that it was only a very special, limited set of conditions that made for America's temporary success no matter how long they seemed to last. In a word, we confused and took for granted short time, temporary conditions as permanent, God-granted advantages that existed for all time.[76]

A 1960 report of the National Industrial Conference Board foreshadowed this concern:

> The challenge of the Forties and Fifties was essentially a production challenge, and our present abundance testifies to the success with which it was met. The challenge

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[74]Donnelly 67.

[75]Franco Ferrarotti, The End of Conversation: The Impact of Mass Media on Modern Society (New York: Greenwood, 1988) 13.

[76]Mitroff and Bennis 27.

> of the Sixties seems to lie in a final severing of our ties to postwar artificialities, and a rededication to the normal and vigorous incentives for growth and efficiency that have been present in our free enterprise economy throughout our history.[77]

Mitroff and Bennis argued that the growth of the "unreality industry" also resulted from the growing complexity of society. "If men cannot control the realities with which they are faced, then they will invent unrealities over which they can maintain the illusion of control."[78] Social movements in the 1960s did not provide breakthroughs but breakdowns in society with the individual taking precedence over societal needs and concerns. "There seems to be no such thing as the common good now, as everyone pledges allegiance to himself. What began as a kind of neopopulism has turned into plain old narcissism."[79] Mitroff and Bennis indicated that the American people have not had a common vision since the 1960s, and "as a nation can't survive without virtue, it can't progress without some common vision."[80]

Uncommon Vision

Notions of consensus or common vision also came under attack in the 1960s and 1970s. Richard Cirino, in 1971, argued that consensus in the United States, which the mass media helped to validate, was a matter of limited audience participation. Such participation occurred only within a narrow framework: "Mass media man is primarily an observer, a receptor of the images, sounds, and print projected to him. He responds now and then within the narrow limits of acceptability as defined in the mass media, but he is basically a receptor as he allows mass media to fill the voids of participation with the fill of

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[77]Economic Growth 3.

[78]Mitroff and Bennis 7.

[79]Mitroff and Bennis 154.

[80]Mitroff and Bennis 164.

pre-edited news and entertainment."[81] Michael Parenti, in 1980, contended that the mass media had defined "the scope of respectable discourse, channeling public attention in certain directions and determining – in ways that are essentially supportive of the existing socioeconomic structure – what is political reality."[82]

Commercial broadcasting continued to face opposition from public-interest groups that challenged its efforts to promote culture, education, and the general common good. An outgrowth of these debates was the passage of legislation in 1967 to create the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The law made public television more reliant on Congressional appropriations and more sensitive to political pressures.

The late 1960s and early 1970s were also a period of visible social disorganization in the United States and challenges to a common vision. The Southern civil rights movement and opposition to the Vietnam War brought protesters into the streets and raised issues about the unified fabric of US society. Despite the common reception of mass communication messages, social differences were much in evidence. A number of issues arose in addition to civil rights and anti-war sentiments. Riots in Northern cities brought questions about the appropriate role of the mass media in bringing marginal groups into the mainstream of US society. President Lyndon Johnson's charge to the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, the Kerner Commission, included the question: "What effect do the mass media have on the riots?"[83] Questions arose about access to media for minority groups and for those who wished to oppose institutional views.

As with earlier mass communication innovations, such as movies and radio, questions arose about the presentation of different lifestyles on television and the creation

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[81]Robert Cirino, Don't Plame the People (New York: Random House, 1971) 30.

[82]Michael Parenti, Democracy for the Few, 3rd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980) 168.

[83]Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: Bantam, 1968) 362.

of revolutions of rising expectations.[84] Also present was the idea that television became the dominant mass medium because the interest of big business and its government supporters were to dominate members of the audience in a "mass society" and television was a distraction from addressing the problems of the world. At odds with this notion was the idea that television had played key roles in furthering the Southern civil rights movements and in building opposition to the Vietnam War. Changes in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s renewed criticism of mass communication as a source of divisiveness and isolation of the individual.

Communication Solutions

As government policy-makers grappled with these social problems in the 1960s and 1970s they viewed communication as a solution as well as a cause of these problems. Peter M. Hall and John P. Hewitt in 1970 used the occasion of US bombing in Cambodia to question the role of communication to hold society together in a time of controversy. The "quasi-theory of communication breakdown" also was an extension of William Gamson's "illusory choice fallacy."[85] In 1968, Gamson contended that communication failure may seem a factor in poor decision-making: "By emphasizing the collective aspects of decisions and their complexity, any problem may be treated as involving a technical matter of the effectiveness of different alternatives in producing public goods."[86]

Hall and Hewitt indicated that emphasis on communication as a tool for conflict resolution was the result of a US myth of common values. President Nixon's efforts to build better relations with students and anti-war protesters resulted from the "notion of

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[84]Bradley S. Greenberg, "Mass Communication Behavior and the Urban Poor," Blacks and Whites: The Urban Communication Crisis, ed. Edmund M. Midura (Washington, DC: Acropolis Books, 1971) 18-19.

[85]William A. Gamson, Power and Discontent (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1968) 187.

[86]Gamson 187.

what gives rise to organization and interpersonal problems and how these can be resolved. This notion stresses that problems (failures, errors, conflicts, controversies, and crises) are due to breakdowns in channels of communication."[87] Hall and Hewitt argued that attention to communication channels was an attempt to avoid the real issues of the war and policy disagreements.[88]

Proposals for further development of cable television to resolve social problems mirrored these efforts to address war-policy debates. If commercial broadcasting was not sufficient to meet social needs or redress social problems, then the solution might be more communication, in the form of cable television. The late 1960s and early 1970s were a period of high expectations for an "information revolution" because of the development of cable television and other computer and communication advances. The cable industry as well as government and public-interest groups joined in elevating expectations for the still new medium.[89] These expectations came at a time of social unrest in the country and reflected earlier expectations of the role that a new communications medium could play in improving society.[90] Although "community antenna television" (CATV) began as a means to bring television signals to areas unable to receive such signals because of distance from broadcasting centers or unfavorable terrain features, supporters of cable television promoted the greater channel capacity that cable offered over broadcasting, the possibilities of "narrowcasting" to audiences with specific interests or needs, and the prospect of using two-way cable television to provide interactive services through which viewers could make

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[87]Peter M. Hall and John P. Hewitt, "The Quasi-Theory of Communication and the Management of Dissent," Social Problems 18 (1970): 19.

[88]Hall and Hewitt 20.

[89]Maddox 145.

[90]Anne W. Branscomb, "The Cable Fable: Will It Come True?" Journal of Communication 25.1 (1975): 51.

entertainment choices or shopping decisions or express political views. Expectations for this "information revolution" included more than new electronic toys. Goals of public-interest support for cable television included reconstitution of community, revitalization of democracy, and increased access to communication resources for minority and disadvantaged groups. Proposed was a two-tier delivery system of cable television services with a lower tier of community programming and an upper tier of delivery of broadcast entertainment and information.[91]

Although the FCC in 1966 essentially froze cable system expansion into urban areas, events as diverse as riots in the streets of those urban areas and Neil Armstrong's first steps on the Moon helped to create interest in the new communications technology. The successful lunar mission in 1969 provided an example of technological success and of the rapid pace of technological change. Editors of Science and Technology magazine in April 1968 devoted the entire issue to the coming "communication revolution." Associate Editor Charles J. Lynch noted the ramifications of such a revolution:

> Communication is, after all, the means by which people interact across both time and space; it is the stuff of which society is made, a yardstick by which civilization is measured. Anything that can dramatically change the means of communication has potential for making great changes in our society.[92]

Alvin Toffler in 1970 introduced the term "future shock" into the US vernacular with the warning that rapid technological changes were creating psychological and social dislocations, and he advised that technological counter-measures could forestall dire effects of such dislocations.[93] Concern about the shape of the future also brought the founding of

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[91]Colle 9-10.

[92]Charles J. Lynch, "A Communications Revolution," Science and Technology April 1968: 15.

[93]Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (New York: Random House, 1970).

the World Future Society and its publication, The Futurist.[94] Sociologist Daniel Bell,[95] political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski,[96] and others[97] advised that the world was entering a new economic era as different from the industrial era as that era was from the preceding agrarian era. The currency of the new era would be information, and the storage, retrieval, and transmission of information would be the principal occupations of the new day. Marriage of computer and telephone technologies would help to create the "communications revolution."[98] The National Academy of Engineering's Committee on Telecommunications in 1969 issued a report that listed sixteen technologies, including cable television, that could help to provide solutions to urban problems.[99] Proponents of cable television saw not only the technological possibilities of the use of coaxial cable but also their applications to social problems.

Racial unrest that had helped to fuel urban riots in the 1960s brought questions about the role of the mass media in urban areas and the access of minorities to the media. In its report on civil disorders, the Kerner Commission did not fault news coverage of the riots but questioned media attention to minorities and urban areas.[100] The Kerner Commission reported that the mass media had failed to portray adequately the problems of

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[94]Bradley Graham, "Futurists Prospering Again," Washington Post 27 May 1979, fnl. ed.; E1.

[95]Daniel Bell, Coming of the Post Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting (New York: Basic Books, 1973)

[96]Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era (New York: Viking, 1970).

[97]John Merrill and Ralph L. Lowenstein, Media, Messages, and Men (New York: David McKay, 1971) 33-44.

[98]Lynch 14.

[99]National Academy of Engineering Committee on Telecommunications, Telecommunications for Enhanced Metropolitan Function and Form (Washington, DC: National Academy of Engineering, 1969).

[100]Civil Disorders 366-7.

minorities: "The ills of the ghetto, the difficulties of life there, the Negro's burning sense of grievance are seldom conveyed."[101] In the report of the President's Task Force on Communications Policy, the Rostow panel promoted cable television as a means to increase access to the communications media and to increase the diversity of television offerings.[102] The report indicated that the programming for a broad audience might not meet the needs of minority groups: "Additional television channels and facilities dedicated to their problems, and to the expression of their concerns, talents, and sensibilities are of critical importance to the most fundamental of our national policies – the fulfillment of our commitment to achieve for disadvantaged minorities equality of opportunity and the full enjoyment of American life."[103] The FCC in its 1970 notice of proposed rule-making on cable television regulations indicated that cable television capabilities could help to reconstitute community.[104] In its 1974 final report, the Cabinet Committee on Cable Communications also foresaw a revitalization of democracy and reconstitution of community: "Rather than increase the alienation of individual from individual and group from group, cable could combine the shared experience of national television with a type of active participation in the political and social progress that was common in the days before urbanization eroded the opportunity for personal involvement in events that affected the community."[105]

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[101] Civil Disorders 366.

[102] Eugene V. Rostow, President's Task Force on Communications Policy. Final Report. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1968) 9-11.

[103] Rostow 6.

[104] 25 FCC 2d 38, *8

[105] Cabinet Committee on Cable Communications, Cable: Report to the President (Washington: GPO, 1974) 15.

The Access Movement

Cable television became a factor in promotion of an access movement that took several forms. Legal scholar Jerome A. Barron sought to expand the notion of the "fairness doctrine" to all mass media to provide a right of reply.[106] In its Tornillo decision, the Supreme Court decided not to extend the right of editorial reply to newspapers.[107] Access of anti-smoking advocates to television time to counter cigarette advertising won FCC approval in 1967.[108] A federal appeals court upheld this extension of the Fairness Doctrine to commercial speech but agreed with the FCC that "cigarette advertising represents a unique situation."[109] The Supreme Court, in 1973, also ruled that broadcasting stations did not have to accept editorial advertising.[110]

Phil Jacklin, a professor at San Jose State University, and the Committee for Open Media attempted to have the FCC regulate television stations' provision of time for public-service announcements, particularly to provide timely airing of these announcements. Jacklin contended that openness to diversity of opinion was central to democracy: "The competition for ideas is an open competition when it is possible for new voices to make themselves heard, for people to bring new issues to public debate and to place them on the agenda for collective decision."[111] While Jacklin noted the practical limitations of all citizens having the opportunity to express their views, he argued that political diversity in

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[106]Jerome A. Barron, "Access to the Press: A New First Amendment Right." Harvard Law Review 80 (1967): 1641.

[107]418 US 241 (1974).

[108]In the Matter of Television Station WCBS-TV, New York, N.Y. Applicability of the Fairness Doctrine to Cigarette Advertising, 9 FCC 2d 921 (1967).

[109]Banzhaf v. FCC, 405 F. 2d 1082 (DC Cir. 1967), *cert. denied,* 396 US 842 (1969).

[110]CBS, Inc. v. Democratic National Committee, 412 US 94 (1973)

[111]Phil Jacklin, "Representative Diversity," Journal of Communication 28.2 (1978): 86.

communication should represent political diversity in society: "Representative diversity only exists when new ideas have an opportunity to compete for public acceptance."[112]

The FCC denied the request to mandate the timely airing of public-service announcements, but a federal appeals court remanded the issue to the FCC for further consideration.[113] The FCC again denied the request on remand and contended that the Fairness Doctrine was adequate for the purpose.[114]

Also of concern was provision of public access channels, so all citizens would have the opportunity to present their ideas and interests on cable television. Royal D. Colle, in the early 1960s, noted that cable television could provide highly specialized local programming.[115] Colle contended that community programming would meet FCC goals of increased local expression on television: "[T]he burgeoning CATV industry could be a complement to the highly centralized programming offered over broadcast television stations – it could truly be television at the grassroots."[116] Helping to generate interest in community-access television was Sony's introduction, in 1968, of the first video camera and recorder unit.[117] Experiments in community access began, in the early 1970s, at public television stations in Boston, San Francisco, and New York. In 1971, a $500,000 grant from the Markle Foundation helped to establish the Alternate Media Center at New

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[112]Jacklin 87.

[113]NCCB v. FCC, 567 F. 2d. 1095 (DC Cir. 1977).

[114]In the Matter of the Handling of Public Interest Issues Under the Fairness Doctrine and the Public Interest Standards of the Communications Act, 74 FCC 2d 163 (1979)

[115]Royal D. Colle, "Television at the Grassroots: CATV," Journal of Broadcasting 7 (1962-63): 9.

[116]Colle 10.

[117]Ralph Engelman, The Origins of Public Access Cable Television, 1966-1972. Communication Monographs 123 (Columbia, SC: AEJMC, 1990) 3.

York University, which became a focal point for development of community television.[118] Public access programming began in Manhattan in 1971, and foundation grants also went to organizations, such as the Alternate Media Center and Open Channel, to facilitate the public's use of cable television access. Theadora Sklover, founder and executive director of Open Channel, said public groups needed to learn how to shape visual images effectively to counter the insulating effects of broadcast television.[119] Sklover criticized the notion that the nearly full penetration of television in the United States provided a "national village" for members of its audience: "This collective viewing doesn't necessarily make us a village. In fact, it may be destroying basic features of our neighborhood villages. We don't even speak to each other. We simply receive, one-way, a common production from a common source."[120]

"Wired" Society

Promotion of cable television to solve social problems reached a "critical mass" in the early 1970s as the cable industry and government and foundation reports explicated the benefits of a "wired" society.[121] A seminal work of that period was the report of the Sloan Commission on Cable Communications in 1971.[122] The report's title indicated that cable could provide "television of abundance." Ralph Lee Smith, a member of the Sloan Commission staff, helped to popularize the recommendations of the panel with an article,

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[118]Engelman 18-20.

[119]Thomas Fairbairn, "Public Access in New York City: An Interview with Theadora Sklover," Yale Review of Law and Social Action 2 (1972): 229.

[120]Fairbairn 229.

[121]Harold J. Barnett and Edward Greenberg, "A Proposal for the Wired City," Washington University Law Quarterly 1968 (1968): 1-25.

[122]Sloan Commission on Cable Communications, On the Cable: The Television of Abundance (New York: McGraw, 1971).

"Wired Nation," published in The Nation in 1970.[123] Smith expanded the article into a book with the same title in 1972.[124] The subtitle of the book, "Cable TV: The Electronic Communications Highway," provided a foreshadowing of the currently proposed "information superhighway." The Urban Institute in 1971 provided a guide, Cable Television in the Cities, for minority involvement in cable television systems.[125] The United Church of Christ in 1972 published Cable Television: A Guide for Civic Action to increase public involvement in the development, regulation, and uses of cable television.[126] Grants from the Ford Foundation, $2.5 million, and the Markle Foundation, $500,000, established the Cable Television Information Center at the Urban Institute to provide assistance to municipalities in the granting of cable television franchises.[127] Critics of the excesses of technological hyperbole described these years as the "blue sky" era of the cable television industry.[128] Critics of the promises also found a useful rhyme as a title for their critiques of cable television promises – the cable fable. The Yale Review of Law and Social Action in 1972 devoted an entire issue to the "cable fable" to challenge the findings of the Sloan Commission.[129] Kas Kalba, in the introductory essay for the issue, contended that the cable television policy-making had not included

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[123]Ralph Lee Smith, "Wired Nation," The Nation 18 May 1970: 582.

[124]Ralph Lee Smith, The Wired Nation, Cable TV: The Electronic Communications Highway (New York: Harper, 1972).

[125]Charles Tate, ed., Cable Television in the Cities: Community Control, Public Access, and Minority Ownership (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 1971).

[126]Monroe E. Price and John Wicklein, Cable Television: A Guide for Civic Action (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1972).

[127]"Creation of Cable Information Center," New York Times 12 Jan. 1972, fnl. ed.: 83.

[128]Streeter 174-5.

[129]Kas Kalba, "The Cable Fable." Yale Review of Law and Social Action 2 (1972): 195.

adequate public participation, had not examined the long-range effects of cable development, and had not included social goals such as greater minority ownership.[130] Kalba, a member of the Sloan Commission staff, argued that rather than attempting to meet consumer needs, cable policy "repeatedly protects industry interests whether they may be those of broadcasters, cable system operators, or copyright holders."[131] Debate about cable television and its future promise came to a head in the early 1970s as the Federal Communications Commission attempted to encourage growth of the new medium without jeopardizing the commercial television broadcasting system.

Third Report and Order

Between August 1971 and February 1972, the fate of the communication revolution apparently hung in the balance. The FCC in August 1971 had announced formally to Congress plans to allow cable television into the nation's one-hundred largest broadcasting markets after a five-year "freeze." Supporters of the cable industry contended that without expansion into urban areas, the industry could not increase minorities' opportunities for communication access in cities or have the revenue to develop a wide range of new electronic services: home shopping and banking, entertainment on demand, and direct participation in the political process. Broadcasters indicated that "parasitic" competition from cable television systems would undermine the availability of "free" television to the public, and movie companies questioned retransmission of entertainment fare without royalty fees. In December, the White House brokered a deal to win acquiescence from the affected industries and business groups. In February 1972, the FCC approved a modified plan to end the cable freeze.

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[130]Kalba 198.

[131]Kalba 198.

Critics and supporters of the FCC cable action, the Third Report and Order, questioned press coverage of the cable television deliberations, particularly in regard to framing of the issues under debate. Communications consultant Fred W. Friendly in 1972 argued that a lack of news coverage had resulted in a business compromise that failed to recognize the public interest: "Most newspapers and broadcast stations botched or ignored the story. After all it is a complex issue. It is my contention that with the possible exception of Vietnam and the cities, telecommunications is more important than any story the media covers, and it gives it short shrift."[132] Stuart P. Sucherman, a Ford Foundation official, indicated in a 1971 Columbia Journalism Review analysis that the press essentially had ignored coverage of cable television issues, probably because of the limitations of such coverage:

> To cover and explain cable TV in a twenty-minute film segment or a three-paragraph back-of-the-paper story is an impossibility. Maybe that is why coverage has been so slim. Cable TV admittedly is one of the most complex and difficult subjects – but its technological and economic implications are so vast that it could change the way Americans live.[133]

Other commentators indicated that academic and journalistic interest had propelled cable television toward greater acceptance that made the compromise feasible. Bruce Owen of the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy, in 1973, indicated that academic interest in cable services had made cable more respectable to Washington policy-makers.[134] Kenneth R. Goodwin, a planning official with the FCC, in 1973 contended

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[132]Fred W. Friendly, address, Publi-Cable Seminar, National Education Association, New York, 5 May 1972.

[133]Stuart P. Sucherman, "Cable TV: The Endangered Revolution, Columbia Journalism Review May/June 1971: 13

[134]Bruce R. Owen, "A View From the President's Office of Telecommunications Policy," The Role of Analysis in Regulatory Decision-Making: The Case of Cable Television, ed. Rolla Edward Park (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1973) 10.

that "widespread media coverage of the cable debate heightened expectations that the FCC would act to encourage cable growth."[135]

Speculation in the early 1970s about the effects of a cable-led "communication revolution" mirrors current interest in the development of an "information superhighway" and its economic, social, and political effects. Among issues of contention were what roles the federal government, commercial providers, public-interest groups, and consumers should have in policy-making for cable television and whether minorities and the disadvantaged would have full access to its services and opportunities. Newspaper coverage of the period generally framed the cable television policy debate in terms of whether a cable-led "communications revolution" would proceed from expansion of cable television systems into the nation's one-hundred largest markets.

Cable History

Although "community antenna television" (CATV) began as a means to bring television signals to areas unable to receive such signals because of distance from broadcasting centers or unfavorable terrain features, legal authority for regulation of cable television initially was unclear. A series of lawsuits helped to clarify the FCC's authority to regulate cable. Initial FCC efforts to regulate cable television systems were without any statutory authority.[136] The FCC's efforts to assume jurisdiction over cable television systems resulted in a series of lawsuits that challenged the regulatory authority of the commission over cable television, but the US Supreme Court in US v. Southwestern Cable in 1968 held that cable television was an "ancillary" or supplementary service to

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[135]Kenneth R. Goodman, "Another View From the Federal Cable Communications Commission," The Role of Analysis in Regulatory Decision-Making: The Case of Cable Television, ed. Rolla Edward Park (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1973) 44.

[136]Beach Communications v. FCC, 959 F. 2d. 975, 977 (DC Cir. 1992).

broadcasting[137] and the FCC thus had authority to regulate cable television. The high court in US v. Midwest Video in 1972 declared a goal was "to integrate the CATV service into the national television structure in such a way as to promote maximum television service to all people of the United States – both those who are cable viewers and those dependent on off-the-air service."[138] The Supreme Court's Fortnightly decision in 1968, to the surprise of broadcasters and regulators, provided protection for cable companies from copyright infringement lawsuits.[139]

Supporters of cable television promoted the greater channel capacity that cable offered over broadcasting, the possibilities of "narrowcasting" to audiences with specific interests or needs, and the prospect of using two-way cable television to provide interactive services through which viewers could make entertainment choices or shopping decisions or express political views. The FCC restriction on urban development had attempted to protect broadcast television and particularly the nascent UHF channels.[140] Goals of public-interest support for cable television included reconstitution of community, revitalization of democracy, and increased access to communication resources for minority and disadvantaged groups.

Newspaper industry interest in the cable debate seemed generally confined to whether newspapers would continue to be able to own cable systems, especially with a looming communication revolution. Editor&Publisher, a newspaper industry trade

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[137]392 US 137, 175 (1968).

[138]406 US 649, 665 (1972).

[139]Fortnightly Corp. v. United Artists Television, Inc., 392 US 390 (1968).

[140]Richard Olin Berner, Constraints on the Regulatory Process: A Case Study of Regulation of Cable Television (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1976) 16-7.

publication, confined its coverage of the cable policy deliberations to this question.[141] The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times in April 1971 carried reports of newspaper industry opposition to a proposed FCC ban of media cross-ownership. A United Press International dispatch in the New York Times quoted Arthur B. Henderson, the ANPA general counsel, as indicating that the commission proposal "was in violation of the First Amendment guarantee of free press and free speech."[142] The Post in August carried a UPI dispatch that again questioned proposed restrictions on newspaper ownership of cable systems. An ANPA spokesman indicated:

> Newspapers have the means to make a significant contribution to the information explosion as augured by the emerging cable technology. What's more, they have the incentives to foster the development of electronic information services – not only to keep pace with the times, but to survive in an increasingly electronic age as publishers of news in their home communities. [143]

Chronology of Negotiations

Central to the debate about the future of cable television in the early 1970s was the question of importation of distant signals. Although early cable television systems brought television programs to areas that could not receive over-the-air transmission, cable television companies were attempting to move into urban areas, which already were receiving programming from both network and independent broadcast stations. By 1971, 2,500 cable systems were providing programming to approximately 4.9 million viewers.[144] Cable television, which reached approximately 10% of the broadcast

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[141]Lee Bogart, "How CATV Will Affect Newspapers and Retailers," Editor&Publisher 9 Jan. 1971: 120; "Western Group Fights Ban on CATV Entry," Editor&Publisher 30 Jan. 1971: 19; "Andersen Will Lead Broadcast Task Force," Editor&Publisher 6 Feb. 1971: 9.

[142]"Publishers Battle FCC on Owning Radio-TV Outlets," New York Times 3 April 1971, fnl. ed.: 9.

[143]"Publishers Group Hits CATV Ruling," Washington Post 17 Aug. 1971, ntl. ed.: D2.

[144]Rolla Edward Park, ed., The Role of Analysis in Regulatory Decisionmaking: The Case of Cable Television (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1973) 86.

television audience,[145] had made inroads into urban areas such as New York and San Diego because of the ability to provide better color transmission and more program diversity,[146] but cable representatives argued that only availability of signals from distant cities could provide the diversity that would make cable television attractive to urban residents.[147]

Broadcasting executives argued that such importation of distant signals would be unfair competition for broadcasters, particularly UHF stations that were attempting to survive a lack of viewer interest.[148] Although the FCC had attempted to regulate transmission of distant signals by microwave on a case-by-case basis, under pressure, presumably from broadcast industries, the commission in its 1966 Second Report and Order barred importation of distant signals into the nation's one-hundred largest broadcast markets, effectively blocking cable entry.[149] In a series of proposals during the next few years, the FCC attempted unsuccessfully to resolve those issues.[150]

By the early 1970s, a number of factors prompted expectations of changes in cable policy. Appointment of Dean Burch as FCC chairman and Clay Whitehead to head the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy essentially brought into the cable-broadcasting debates officials more supportive of cable television than their

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[145]Walter S. Baer, Cable Television: A Handbook for Decisionmaking (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1973) 7.

[146]Smith, Wired Nation 6.

[147]Leland L. Johnson, The Future of Cable Television: Some Problems of Regulation (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1970) 18.

[148]Berner 17.

[149]Harvey Jassem, "The Selling of the Cable TV Compromise," Journal of Broadcasting 17 (1973): 429.

[150]Don R. Le Duc, Beyond Broadcasting: Patterns in Policy and Law (New York: Longman, 1987) 85-7.

predecessors.[151] Broadcasting magazine reported, a few months after Burch took the FCC post, that "the word is going out of the commission that the chairman is 'pro-CATV.'"[152] Whitehead endorsed "a regulatory framework that is favorable to the growth and development of the cable industry."[153] The Rostow Commission report in 1968 had endorsed development of cable as a means to provide better communication access for minorities in urban areas.[154] The cable television industry also began to restructure as multiple system operators (MSOs) began to replace smaller cable firms.[155]

The New York Times provided notice of new cable deliberations in March 1971, with FCC public hearings on the future of cable regulations. Although the Times did not provide extensive coverage of testimony at the hearings, a report indicated that one problem of such regulation was that cable potential was two-fold, both as a retransmitter of over-the-air signals and with the potential of a number of non-broadcast programs and services, "a new system of communication unto itself."[156] The report also noted broadcasters' characterization of cable systems as "destructive parasites."[157] Times columnist Max Frankel indicated in a column a few days later that the conflict that the FCC faced was in balancing the promotion of cable television "while making certain, in the early stages, that the widest possible segment of the public will have access both to the management of the

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[151]Jassem 430-1; Patrick Parsons, Cable Television and the First Amendment (Lexington, MA; Lexington Books) 17.

[152]"Signs of New Stability at the FCC," Broadcasting 26 Jan. 1970: 47.

[153]Clay T. Whitehead, "Cable Television: The Problems and the Policies," California Community Television Association, Anaheim, CA, 16 Nov. 1972.

[154]Rostow 38.

[155]Park, 82-3.

[156]Christopher Lydon, "FCC Renews Request for Cable Policy," New York Times 11 March 1971, fnl. ed.: 78.

[157]Lydon, "FCC Renews" 78.

system and the material it purveys."[158] Frankel noted the parade of witnesses at the FCC hearings and the interest of many that the FCC effectively plan cable television use for the common good: "The overwhelming plea of disinterested witnesses is that the commission retain tight control over a medium that is likely to dominate communication in a short time, carrying public, commercial, and personal news, information and entertainment."[159]

In a news story the same day, the Times reported that the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ was initiating a program to provide access to cable television for minorities and the poor. The advisory service was to inform citizens of their rights in regard to cable television services and was in response to "concerns that commercial interests would dominate the development of cable communications and deny access to the medium by minorities and the poor."[160]

FCC Chairman Burch in April 1971 had little optimism about quick resolution of the cable controversy when he spoke to a meeting of the National Association of Broadcasters. The New York Times also reported that Burch expected Congress to review thoroughly any proposals for resolution of disputes over the future of cable.[161] The Times carried an Associated Press dispatch later in April that President Nixon had named a cabinet-level committee to help develop cable television policy. Clay Whitehead was to head the panel with the charge to "permit full development of cable TV's potential without serious disruption of existing television services."[162] The White House action brought disquiet

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[158]Max Frankel, "The Ides of March: Nixon Aides Discover Good Omens," New York Times 16 March 1971, fnl. ed.: 21.

[159]Frankel 21.

[160]Fred Ferretti, "Church Acts To Enlist CATV for Poor," New York Times 16 March 1971, fnl. ed.: 75.

[161]Jack Gould, "Burch Tells NAB He Expects Conflicts Over Public Interest," New York Times 1 April 1971, fnl. ed.: 83.

[162]"Nixon Names Panel on Cable TV Policy," New York Times 24 April 1971, ntl. ed.: 77.

from the cable television industry. The New York Times reported in July that Senator John McClellan, chairman of the Senate subcommittee on patents, trademarks, and copyrights, had not reassured industry delegates at a National Cable Television Association convention. The Times reported that McClellan, a Democrat, had referred "to the general feeling in the cable industry that President Nixon's intervention, coming close to the start of an election year, was a pointed reminder to broadcasters that they need a friend in the White House."[163] The Times reported that the senator also had questioned the make-up of the committee: "Senator McClellan observed disapprovingly that the six-man committee President Nixon has appointed to review cable policy has more experience in politics than in the tangled issues of communications and regulations."[164]

The Times reported that Whitehead, who also addressed the NCTA convention, told delegates that the White House cable committee had as its purpose not a delay in cable growth but an acceleration in development of cable policy: "Mr. Whitehead contends that the FCC is too mired in the minutiae of regulation to deal with the sweeping significance of cable policy formation."[165] Whitehead said the White House and Congress both would have a role in development of cable policy since cable television involved not only a retransmission of broadcast signals but also provided a "revolutionary diversity and a fundamentally new system of communication."[166] Whitehead left no doubt about the complexity of the cable issues: "The only thing that comes close to it is the strategic nuclear problem."[167]

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[163]Christopher Lydon, "Cable TV Conferees See Wide Gains But a Delay," New York Times 12 July 1971, fnl. ed.: 55.

[164]Lydon, "Cable TV Conferees" 55.

[165]Lydon, "Cable TV Conferees" 55.

[166]Lydon, "Cable TV Conferees" 55.

[167]Lydon, "Cable TV Conferees" 55.

The New York Times reported a few days later that the Center for Policy Research at Columbia University had received a $124,300 grant from the National Science Foundation to study use of cable television for communication and decision-making on the community level. The Times quoted Amitai Etzioni, the center's director, as indicating that the study would determine if cable television could be used to "provide neighborhoods with their own TV networks which could be used for community dialogues with elected officials."[168] The study also was to examine use of cable television for instant polling of citizens of the community and for intercommunication between members of a community.

In June 1971, FCC Chairman Burch testified at a congressional hearing that the FCC was ready to support importation of distant signals into cities to boost cable growth. Burch told the subcommittee, the New York Times reported, that the importation of two distant signals would allow the cable industry to grow without threatening the prosperity of the broadcasting industry. The report noted the dual nature of cable's potential:

> Further, he [Burch] said, the ultimate success of cable television would still rest on the development of services that were not dependent on broadcasting – including original entertainment programming, coverage of local affairs, rental of channels to new commercial markets, and such exotic cable uses as the delivery of facsimile copies of newspapers.[169]

The newspaper report included the position of the cable industry that importation of distant signals was necessary for urban expansion and a "prior condition of any development of its more important potential" while presenting the view of the broadcasting industry that "sees the offering of out-of-town channels as parasitic competition."[170]

By August 1971, Burch had received nearly unanimous commission support for a proposal to allow cable importation of two distant signals into the nation's one-hundred

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[168]"Study is Planned on Cable TV Uses," New York Times 14 July 1971, fnl. ed.: 71.

[169]Christopher Lydon, "Burch Plan Would Let Cable TV Systems Deliver at Least Two Out of Town Channels to All Subscribers," New York Times 16 June 1971, ntl. ed.: 23.

[170]Lydon, "Burch Plan" 23.

largest markets.[171] In an unusual step, Burch notified Congress, in a letter of intent, of the FCC's plans to allow the important of two distant signals into urban markets. In return, the cable systems would have to pay some retransmission fees, provide free channels for public use, government, and education, and lease vacant channels on a common-carrier basis.[172] FCC Chairman Burch's "letter of intent" to Congress in August was a front-page story for the Washington Post, "FCC Moves To Promote Cable TV for Big Cities,"[173] but the New York Times relegated the story to one column on its television page with a somewhat contradictory tone, "FCC Issues Plan for CATV Market: Letter to Congress Urges a Delay in New Policy."[174]

The Post noted the arguments of the cable industry that without out-of-town television programs, "new CATV systems will never be able to attract enough subscribers to generate profits necessary to produce original cable television programs, which would be shown exclusively to subscribers."[175] The Post indicated that the proposed provision of two-way capability "would allow cable systems ultimately to be used for burglar alarms, market surveys of subscribers or even remote ordering of merchandise from stores."[176] The New York Times also noted the future potential for cable: "New cable channels would also have to have two-way capacity, allowing subscribers to send as well as to receive messages and broadening the future uses of cable systems to include such things as

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[171]Jassem 430.

[172]36 FCC 2nd 143, 190-2 (1972).

[173]Robert J. Samuelson, "FCC Moves to Promote Cable TV for Big Cities," Washington Post 6 Aug. 1971, ntl. ed.: A1.

[174] Christopher Lydon, "FCC Issues Plan for CATV Market: Letter to Congress Urges a Delay in New Policy," New York Times 6 Aug. 1971, fnl. ed.: 63.

[175]Samuelson, "FCC Moves" A4.

[176]Samuelson, "FCC Moves" A4.

marketing systems and burglar alarms."[177] An Associated Press story indicated that the FCC planned to encourage cable television without unduly hurting conventional broadcasting. The AP story quoted Burch as indicating that importation of distant signals "is the guts of the document because we recognize that the importation of distant signals will be required to enable the hoped-for benefits of cable to become a reality."[178]

Edward W. Bartlett, former journalism dean at Columbia University, echoed this concern in a New York Times op-ed column August 20:

> To many, CATV is just a means of getting clearer or more distant signals. Yet it offers unparalleled opportunity to gain extraordinary new services. CATV systems can be designed to provide twenty, forty or even more channels. Such channels can afford communications with the neighborhood, minority groups or the constituency of a congressman or candidate. Other channels can serve schools and colleges and provide adult-education courses.[179]

Bartlett cautioned against haste in cable policy deliberations and against a lack of public participation in these deliberations. Participation also was a concern of Theodore S. Ledbetter, Jr., president of the Urban Communications Group, Inc. of Washington, DC. Ledbetter told a religious seminar in New York in September that: "Unless blacks participate in a meaningful way in the development of cable television, cable TV will not develop in any of our major urban communities."[180]

Although the cable industry generally praised the FCC plan, broadcasters and the movie industry resisted the proposals.[181] In July, Whitehead had begun his involvement in the deliberations with a meeting of representatives of the industries, but the FCC

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[177]Lydon, "FCC Issues" 63.

[178]"FCC Proposes New Cable TV Policies," Chicago Tribune 6 Aug. 1971, fnl. ed.: A1.

[179]Edward W. Bartlett, "CATV – Pitfalls and Horizons," New York Times 20 Aug. 1971, fnl. ed.: 33.

[180]"Panel Urges Blacks To Take CATV Role," New York Times 15 Sept. 1971, fnl. ed.; 92.

[181]Berner 46.

announcement about importation of distant signals had ended those talks.[182] As debate continued about the future of the FCC proposal, a group of state cable associations in November purchased an advertisement in the New York Times. The cable groups appealed directly to President Nixon to serve the public interest rather than "narrow commercial" interests: "[O]ur trade press tells us that your Office of Telecommunications Policy is being pressured to bar the well-forged proposal of the FCC which would give us a compromise chance to serve millions of Americans."[183] The advertisement described the FCC proposal as a compromise that provided the first opportunity to resolve problems with spectrum allocations: "Our industry offers the *only* way that free and generous public access to TV can be accomplished."[184] The ad asked Nixon to consider the future potential of cable: "You have heard of the wired-nation concept. You can talk to the nation over cable as well as through the air."[185]

In November, Whitehead and Burch presented the affected parties with an alternative proposal.[186] In what Burch described as a compromise, representatives of the industry groups accepted and their constituents later ratified a proposal that tied distant-signal importation to exclusivity rights.[187] Under the plan, cable companies would be able to import distant signals into the fifty largest markets, but stations in those areas would retain exclusive rights to programming for the duration of their contracts. In the next fifty markets, such exclusivity rights would last only for two years.[188] The exclusivity

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[182]Don R. Le Duc, Cable Television and the FCC: A Crisis in Media Control (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1973) 196.

[183]"Our Letter to the President," adv., New York Times 5 Nov. 1971, fnl. ed.; 27.

[184]"Our Letter" 27 (author's italics).

[185]"Our Letter" 27.

[186]Jassem 432.

[187]36 FCC 2nd 143, 291 (1972).

[188]36 FCC 2nd 143, 181-2 (1972).

provisions essentially prevented cable operations in the fifty largest markets, but analysts indicated that cable companies were able to move from a potential market of 10% of the broadcast audience to a potential market of 25% of the broadcast audience.[189] Although the Washington Post's headline November 11 indicated that "Compromise Reached in Battle Over Cable TV,"[190] the New York Times that day reported "White House Weighs Plan."[191] The Times reported November 12 on the front page that "Cable TV Accord Sets Its Growth: Compromise Is Gained With Support of White House – Broadcasters Agree."[192]

The Post carried the details of the OTP-brokered agreement and repeated the cable industry's argument that importation of distant signals was necessary to develop cable's potential: "And only after establishing a base of subscribers, the CATV industry contended, could it begin to provide the variety of services possible with cable control-station burglar alarms, specialized television programs, broadcasts of local government meetings, or school events."[193] The Times story November 11 reported that Whitehead had told the cable industry that the agreement was the last chance for compromise: "If the cable operators do not yield quickly, Mr. Whitehead is warning the five-year fight over the future of cable will go to Congress, where the FCC plan will probably be changed and will certainly be delayed."[194] The November 11 story included no discussion of potential

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[189]Le Duc, Beyond Broadcasting 87.

[190]Robert J. Samuelson, "Compromise Reached in Battle Over Cable TV," Washington Post 11 Nov. 1971, ntl. ed: A8.

[191]Christopher Lydon, "Cable TV Weighs White House Plan: Proposal Would Set Policy for Controlled Growth," New York Times 11 Nov. 1971, fnl. ed.: 19.

[192]Christopher Lydon, "Cable TV Accord Sets Its Growth: Compromise Is Gained With Support of White House – Broadcasters Agree," New York Times 12 Nov. 1971, fnl. ed.: 1.

[193]Samuelson, "Compromise Reached" A8.

[194]Lydon, "Cable TV Weighs" 19.

revolutionary benefits of cable television. The front page story in the Times November 12 indicated that the "agreement, reached with the strong encouragement of the White House, is designed to extend cable's growth out of the remote rural areas, where it began, into the nation's smaller cities. But it would purposively slow cable's development in the 50 largest markets where more than two-thirds of the American television audience lives."[195] The Times summarized the effects of the agreement:

> For both sides, however, the agreement ended an era of anxious instability and appeared to remove the threat of direct intervention by the Government. Dean Burch, FCC chairman, has embraced the changes that the White House made in his earlier proposal, and informed Congressional sources speculated this evening that there would be no interference in a plan that the powerful private interests all accepted.[196]

Among critics of the cable television agreement was Amitai Etzioni of Columbia University. The Times reported November 18 that Etzioni had questioned the role of the public in the deliberations: "Agreement between the two most powerful commercial contenders in the fields of broadcasting and cable TV, Dr. Etzioni added, should not be allowed to overshadow full participation by the public as a third party at interest."[197]

In the midst of the cable agreement, the Sloan Commission released its recommendations for development of a national cable system. Both the Washington Post and the New York Times carried stories on the release of the Sloan Commission report. The Post report found the Sloan recommendations more liberal on distant-signal importation than the industry agreement: "These differences reflect divergent attitudes toward the possible threat cable may pose to the broadcasting industry."[198] The Times summarized the Sloan Commission report as finding that "cable television has the potential

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[195]Lydon, "Cable TV Accord" 1.

[196]Lydon, "Cable TV Accord" 95.

[197]Jack Gould, "Accord on Cable TV is Faulted for Allegedly Neglecting Public," New York Times 18 Nov. 1971, fnl. ed.: 95.

[198]Alan M. Krugsman, "The Sloan Report – Viewing Cable TV," Washington Post 9 Dec. 1971, natl,. ed.: D4.

to revolutionize the nation's culture, journalism, politics and community needs and services."[199] In his analysis of the Sloan Commission report, Times columnist John J. O'Connor had little optimism that cable television would provide any improvements in television content even with the "abundance" of cable:

> That promise, covering a wider variety of entertainment, news and services, carries no guarantees. The history of broadcasting is a history of shattered promises. Educational and cultural millennia were clearly slighted with the advent of radio and, years later, of television. The result, with few exceptions, has been a broad band of mass-produced mediocrity, wrapped in the sometimes startling protection of official agencies. [200]

O'Connor noted the possibilities of two-way cable television but questioned the lack of public involvement in deliberations of cable's future:

> After years of protecting broadcasters, the FCC finally did come up with a plan a few months ago that would have allowed cable operators the limited 'importation' of distant signals. The broadcasters were not pleased. Then, in a 'backroom' compromise engineered by the White House's Office of Telecommunications, cable operators and broadcasters agreed to exempt the importation from the 'top 50' population markets. The public, needless to say, was hardly consulted.[201]

A Times editorial the same day also addressed the issue of cable abundance and the Sloan Commission report:

> The options that have emerged as a result of these studies reveal that there is no simple formula that can please existing broadcasters and cable operators. But a larger principle of public interest has come to the forefront, one that stresses a variety of educational, news and other programming on a local and national level. It is this principle that must be served by the Federal Government.[202]

The new year began with a broadcasting broadside against the White House-brokered agreement. CBS President Frank Stanton, in a letter to Congress, argued that the

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[199]Jack Gould, "A Nationwide, Controlled System of Cable TV Is Recommended in Detailed Study by Sloan Commission," New York Times 9 Dec. 1971, fnl. ed.: 94.

[200]John J. O'Connor, "Psst! Wanna Buy a New Genie?" New York Times 19 Dec. 1971, fnl. ed.: Sect. 2, 21.

[201]O'Connor, Sect. 2, 21.

[202]"Cable 'Abundance,'" edit., New York Times 19 Dec. 1971, fnl. ed.: Sect. 4, 10.

cable agreement eventually would deprive millions of poor people of the benefits of "free" television.[203] Post reporter Robert J. Samuelson had other dire predictions in a front-page story, "Cable TV Ruling May Cut Out 50 Big Areas," in late January: "The Federal Communications Commission is on the verge of adopting regulations that should make it difficult for cable television to gain a toehold in many of the nation's cities and suburbs."[204] Samuelson noted that cable proponents argued that installation of cable systems would lead to more diversified programming while broadcasters indicated that "cable will simply multiply the amount of today's mass entertainment programming except that CATV subscribers will have to pay for it."[205] Samuelson also reopened the issue of the political context of the White House-brokered cable agreement:

> Adding to the controversy have been charges – rarely made in public but expressed frequently in private – that the White House intervention in the cable dispute represented an effort to curry favor with the broadcasting industry during an election year. Officials of the White House's Office of Telecommunications Policy, which fathered the compromise, deny those allegations adamantly. 'If that were the case, why do we find the broadcasters so unhappy and expressing their dissatisfaction,' said Brian Lamb, assistant to the director of the OTP.[206]

Samuelson included the cable industry argument that distant-signal importation was an important step in creation of a new communications system: "Once they have established their base, cable leaders say they will be in a better position to promote a wider variety of original new programs and services."[207]

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[203]Jack Gould, "Stanton, in Letter to Congress, Opposes Accord on Cable TV," New York Times 7 Jan. 1971, fnl. ed.: 62; "Compromise Criticized," Washington Post 8 Jan. 1971 , ntl. ed.: E5.

[204]Robert J. Samuelson, "Cable TV Ruling May Cut Out 50 Big Areas," Washington Post 24 Jan. 1971, ntl. ed.: A1.

[205]Samuelson, "Cable TV Ruling" A1.

[206]Samuelson, "Cable TV Ruling" A14. Brian Lamb became the founder and president of C-SPAN, the cable service that televises Senate and House proceedings and as well as other public affairs programming.

[207]Samuelson, "Cable TV Ruling," A14.

The FCC in February 1972 approved the revised plan on a 6-1 vote with its provisions to become effective March 31, 1972.[208] Along with settlement of the issue of importation of distant signals, the FCC required cable systems to provide the capacity for two-way transmission of signals and those with more than 3,500 subscribers to make available at least one public, education, government, and leased-access channel. Access to the channels would be available on a first-come, first-served basis, and cable systems would have to provide a minimum of five minutes of free production time to each group or individual that used the access channel.

The final report included acrimonious exchanges between Burch and Commissioner Nicholas Johnson, who had concurred in part and dissented in part to the majority's decision on the regulations. Johnson criticized White House intervention in the regulatory process and criticized Burch for a lack of public involvement in development of the FCC regulations.[209] He particularly questioned the behind-the-scenes nature of the deliberations on the industry agreement in November.[210]

The Post had the advantage on coverage of the FCC's release of its Third Report and Order that established cable television regulations. In an article, 'FCC Ends Freeze on Cable TV, Approves New Regulations" on page A3 with no by-line, the Post reported February 3: "The Federal Communications Commission yesterday approved new regulations for cable television designed to end a three-year freeze on the expansion of CATV into large and medium-size metropolitan areas." Coverage the next day included front-page stories in the Post, the New York Times, and the Los Angeles Times. The Post and the New York Times were not in full agreement on the impact of the FCC decision.

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[208]36 FCC 2nd 143, 210 (1972). Broadcasting printed the full text of the report in its February 7, 1972 issue, and the National Cable Television Association printed the report under separate cover with the title, "Thaw: New Rules To End the Cable TV Freeze."

[209]36 FCC 2nd 143, 306 (1972).

[210]36 FCC 2nd 143, 314 (1972).

The Times story carried the headline, "New Ruling on Cable TV Limits Its Big City Growth,"[211] while the Post bannered its coverage with "FCC Ruling Opens Door to Cable TV in Major US Cities."[212] The Los Angeles Times headline addressed content rather than area of coverage: "New Rules for Cable TV Issued, See Widening Program Choice."[213]

The New York Times report indicated that the new FCC rules would stimulate the growth of cable television systems in smaller cities but exclusivity provisions would check growth of the cable industry in big cities. The report noted Federal Communications Commissioner Nicholas Johnson's criticism of "secret bargaining" that brought the industry agreement but indicated that FCC Chairman Burch had argued that "the industry pact, limiting the spread of cable networks, was the only practical basis for getting cable TV moving at all."[214] The report also noted the future potential for cable: "Beyond carrying broadcast signals, cable companies are being pushed to develop wholly new services. A requirement, for example, that cables have the capacity to carry messages in both directions will make them adaptable for instructional and security purposes."[215]

The Post account attempted to provide a historical perspective on the FCC decision: "The Federal Communications Commission announced sweeping new rules to regulate and promote the growth of cable television into the nation's metropolitan areas. It was

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[211]Christopher Lydon, "New Ruling on Cable TV Limits Its Big City Growth," New York Times 4 Feb. 1972, fnl. ed.: 1.

[212]"FCC Ruling Opens Door to Cable TV in Major US Cities," Washington Post 4 Feb. 1972, ntl. ed.: A1.

[213] Robert Rosenblatt, "New Rules for Cable TV Issued, See Widening Program Choice," Los Angeles Times 4 Feb. 1972, fnl. ed.: 1.

[214]Lydon, "New Ruling" 1.

[215]Lydon, "New Ruling" 62.

described by agency officials as a decision that could be the beginning of a new era of mass communication."[216]

The story indicated that advocates had promoted cable television as the only way to assure diversified television programs while opponents had contended that cable could become widespread "pay TV."[217] The Post also noted Johnson's criticism of White House interference and indicated that the "cable compromise" was included nearly word-for-word in the FCC rules.[218]

The Los Angeles Times story predicted rapid growth of cable systems in cities "because the new FCC rules permit cable systems to import out-of-town television signals, something they were previously barred from doing."[219] The account did not mention possible effects of exclusivity provisions on installation of cable systems in the fifty largest TV markets, although one of the final paragraphs of the story noted: "The protection for networks and syndicated programs in the top 50 markets is continued in a rule which forbids the cable company from bringing in such a program if it is already available on a local station."[220] The Los Angeles Times, in noting the requirement for new cable systems to have two-way capacity, amplified the potential of the new technology: "Eventually viewers will be able to talk back to the people appearing on television."[221]

A UPI dispatch reported: "The Federal Communications Commission adjusted rules Thursday to let cable television systems for the first time import distant signals into cities

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[216]"FCC Ruling" A1.

[217]"FCC Ruling" A1.

[218]"FCC Ruling" A18.

[219]Rosenblatt 1.

[220]Rosenblatt 1.

[221]Rosenblatt 1.

on the basis of a compromise plan protecting the exclusivity of free TV programs."[222] The dispatch noted the November 10, 1971 industry agreement on distant-signal importation and Johnson's objections: "If cable is to grow, it must be in the big cities – where it is precluded. If the potential need and demand for local channels, public access channels, and minority programming are to be served, it must be in the big cities. It won't be."[223] The dispatch also noted that Burch had addressed the future potential of cable: "Cable TV has to do a lot more. We have to open the way to see if it will be the wave of the future."[224]

Order Moot

With the action in 1972 the FCC weighed in solidly on cable regulation, but court decisions and subsequent technological developments made many of the requirements of the Third Report and Order moot. In its Midwest Video II decision, the Supreme Court invalidated federal requirements for public-access channels.[225] The high court upheld a lower court ruling that the FCC access requirements treated cable television systems as common carriers in violation of a ban of such regulation of broadcasting in the Communications Act of 1934. Although the exact regulatory status of cable television remained a subject of debate, the Supreme Court in Midwest Video II decided to treat cable television as the broadcasting "ancillary" of the Southwestern Cable case.[226] Supporters of public access and community television turned to local and state governments to provide

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[222]"FCC Clears" 12A.

[223]"FCC Clears" 12A.

[224]"FCC Clears" 12A.

[225]FCC v. Midwest Video Corp., 440 US 689 (1979).

[226]392 US 137 (1968).

access mandates in cable franchises and to win support for production services to use that access.[227] Development of satellite technology and implementation of an "open skies" policy transformed the meaning of "distant signals."[228] The FCC decision in 1972, along with satellite technology, pay-cable channels, and squeezing of more channels onto coaxial cables, helped to set the stage in 1980 for what Broadcasting described as a "Gold Rush" of cable companies attempting to win franchises in urban areas.[229]

Government officials, public-interest groups, and newspapers in 1971 and 1972 framed the issue of cable regulation in terms not just of market shares of competing media but in terms of the success or failure of a coming information revolution. Although broadcasting interests attempted to frame the issues in terms of cable "parasites" and deterioration of "free" television and movie studios raised issues of copyright infringement, the cable industry with the aid of government and public-interest groups framed issues of increased program choice, of increased access to communications services in urban areas, and of provision of an exotic variety of two-way services. Growth of the cable television industry, its audience, and its financial resources may have encouraged government action to increase installation of cable systems, but the possibility of a "communications" revolution provided the official rationale for loosening regulation of cable television.

In retrospect, the FCC's approval of the cable Third Report and Order did not result, on a widespread basis, in either the provision of two-way services or increased media access in urban areas. Program diversity has increased but primarily as the result of

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227*See* Robert Pepper, "The Future of Access: Is There Life after Midwest Video?" Cable TV: Guide to Public Access, ed. Eileen T. Bender (South Bend, IN: Indiana U, 1979): 46-9; Sue Miller Buske, "Improving Local Community Access Programming," Public Management June 1980: 12-4; Nancy J. Jesuale, "Noncommercial Access to Cable," A Guide for Local Policy, ed. Nancy Jesuale, Richard M. Neustadt, and Nicholas P. Miller, CTIC Cablebooks 2 (Arlington, VA: CTIC, 1982) 86-90.

228Le Duc, Beyond Broadcasting 95-6.

229"The Gold Rush of 1980: Prospecting for Cable Franchises," Broadcasting 31 Mar. 1980: 35.

satellite transmission of original cable programming rather than importation of distant broadcasting signals. Government and cable industry officials indicated that without the revenue base of urban areas, cable systems would not be able to invest adequate funds in development of new programs and services. Press coverage of the cable deliberations did not frame the debate simply in terms of increased profits for cable systems or delivery of programs on essentially the same basis as network television.

Evaluative Framework

Although the participatory idea of mass communication flourished with television broadcasting and the national experiences of the Kennedy assassination and funeral, critics of television characterized both the medium and its content as divisive. Criticism ranged from the exploitative nature of television to the distancing of audience members from the realities of the world. Federal government policy generally extolled the role of mass communication in the establishment or re-establishment of community and in the promotion of democracy. Policy-makers and public-interest groups also extended this praise to cable television, which offered to overcome the scarcity of television channels available on the electromagnetic spectrum. The cable industry welcomed these social goals as it attempted in the early 1970s to gain a greater foothold against broadcasting interests. Also boosting cable was the access movement that saw greater opportunity for public participation in television program origination with the greater channel capacity offered. The FCC endorsed this goal in the Third Report and Order, only to have the Supreme Court end federal requirements in Midwest Video II. With the development of cable television, the participatory idea of mass communication evolved from simple participation in social, economic, and political events through receipt of messages to a greater role in the development of those messages. Such involvement required direct contact with mass media institutions, which by the 1970s included cable television systems.

Cable television, through two-way transmission of information, also provided the promise that audience members could become direct participants in the communication process as active originators of content – and in the confines of their own homes. Cable industry executives also welcomed these projections as they were attempting to win urban franchises. During the twelve-year period between 1972 and 1984, cable grew and prospered as an alternative means of transmission of broadcasting content. By 1984, industry and government officials acknowledged that the cable companies had oversold the "future." Profits were to come through delivery of traditional broadcast-like fare, entertainment and news, and not home interactive services. Ironically, in 1984 when "Big Brother" was to have been in interactive contact and control of all citizens, the federal government was helping private industry to bail out of the interactive business. The next chapter will examine this wave of enthusiasm for interactive communication and its effect on the participatory idea of mass communication.

CHAPTER 6
THE IDEA: CHALLENGES IN THE 1970S AND 1980S

Introduction

Cable television included two phases of promotion. The first phase, which culminated in 1972, with the FCC's Third Report and Order, involved an attempt to expand the availability of broadcasting content and services, to provide a television of "abundance" rather than the scarcity of the electromagnetic spectrum. This phase of cable development came as the cable industry was attempting to establish legitimacy in competition with television broadcasting. While supporters of cable television argued that cable could provide more television than broadcast television could provide, an undercurrent of this argument was that cable also would provide the platform for an information revolution with narrowcasting and with interactive services. Public-access cable television had offered one alternative, but even the FCC's access requirements in the Third Report and Order failed to overcome limited and sometimes inadequate use of the opportunities.[1] With the Midwest Video II decision in 1979, supporters of greater public access to mass media sought alternatives to broadcasting through interactive services.[2] With the rush for urban franchises in the 1980s, these arguments took on a new urgency. Every city needed interactive services as well as greater channel capacity. This chapter will examine the

[1]Pamela Doty, "Public Access Cable TV: Who Cares?" Journal of Communication 25.3 (1975): 33-41; Lawrence A. Wenner, Cable Television and the Promise of Public Access (Ames: U of Iowa, 1976) 3-8 (ERIC ED 123 677).

[2]Wenner 11-20.

changing communications environment and regulatory climate of the 1970s and 1980s, tests and commercial failures of interactive and two-way communications systems during this period, and the effects of media convergence and development of interactive communication systems on the idea of participatory mass communication.

Interactive Enthusiasm

By the late 1960s, the United States had appeared on the verge of a new era of interactive communications in which the individual would receive and take more responsibility for information and entertainment choices from communications media. Federal Communications Commissioner Nicholas Johnson, in 1967, espoused greater audience participation in regulation and programming of television broadcasting in How To Talk Back to Your Television Set. He declared that "the ultimate vision is a home communications center where a person works, learns, and is entertained, and contributes to his society by way of communications techniques we have not yet imagined."[3] The FCC, in its proposal to re-evaluate regulation of cable television in 1968, noted that cable television could offer information services as well as entertainment programming to homes:

> It has been suggested [by the President's Task Force on Cable] that the expanding multichannel capacity of cable systems could be utilized to provide a variety of new communications services to homes and businesses within a community, in addition to the services now commonly offered, such as time, weather, news, stock exchange ticker, etc.[4]

When the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in 1969 was proposing a new role for itself in the provision of information services as well as broadcasting services to the home, Jordan J. Baruch contended that the United States had evolved past the need simply for mass communication and point-to-point communications systems. Proposed was a

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[3]Nicholas Johnson, How To Talk Back to Your Television Set (Boston: Little, 1967) 121.

[4]Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Notice of Inquiry in Docket 18397, 15 FCC 2d 417, 419-20 (1968).

one-to-many-to-one "extended broadcasting" service that would allow individuals to control access to and retrieval of information from data bases: "Our society needs and is ready for a third type of national communications system. This statement is a reflection of the 'I am I' cry of our students and of the problem of being an individual in the ghetto."[5] Baruch said the "extended broadcasting" proposal "reflects the need for the individual to communicate with the system and a demand that the system recognize the individual."[6] In a 1971 handbook for minorities, Charles Tate suggested that "cable television may be the last communications frontier for the oppressed."[7] Tate noted the channel diversity of cable television and the possibility of two-way transmission of information:

> Community control of CATV systems could be the most effective way to bring an end to the communications void that has existed too long in minority communities. It is the only means for assuring that CATV does not become the modern, electronic slave master that perpetuates economic exploitation, political repression, and cultural genocide against minorities in America.[8]

During the 1970s and 1980s, both cable television and telephone-television links would provide opportunities to experiment with what Ithiel de Sola Pool, in 1973, described as "individualized communication."[9] The FCC, in its 1972 Third Report and Order, required cable television companies to provide the capacity for two-way transmission of signals but did not mandate provision of those services.[10] The FCC

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[5]Jordan J. Baruch, Interactive Television: A Mass Medium for Individuals (New York: EDUCOM, 1969) 3.

[6]Baruch 3.

[7]Charles Tate, ed. , Cable Television in the Cities: Community Control, Public Access, and Minority Ownership (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 1971) 17 .

[8]Tate 37.

[9]Ithiel de Sola Pool, ed. Talking Back: Citizen Feedback and Cable Technology (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1973) 2.

[10]We are not now requiring cable systems to install necessary return communication devices at each subscribed terminal. Such a requirement is premature at this early stage of cable's evolution. It will be sufficient for now that each cable system be constructed with the potential for eventually providing return communication without having to engage in time-consuming and costly system rebuilding. This requirement will be met if a new

indicated that such services could include "surveys, marketing services, burglar alarms, educational feed-back to name a few."[11] The federal government, in the mid-1970s, also funded several experiments with two-way cable television to discern its usefulness in addressing social problems and needs.

While US cable companies, with Warner-Amex's Qube and Cox's Indax, worked to develop two-way cable television services to gain advantages in competition for major-market franchises, government agencies in Great Britain, France, and other nations were linking computers and telephone lines to television sets to provide home services through videotex systems. Computer time-sharing and data-retrieval systems, which later evolved into computer on-line services, also began operation in the United States in the 1970s, and US newspaper chains in the early 1980s began trials of videotex systems. Sam Fedida, who developed videotex in Great Britain, described the system as "viewdata," but "videotex" became the most common term for the two-way transmission of information through computer-telephone-television links. The Consultative Committee on International Telephony and Telegraphy (CCITT) decided in 1978 that the term "videotex" would describe two-way computer service.[12] Knight-Ridder established the Viewdata Corp. of America as its arm to develop its videotex system, Viewtron. Computer data-retrieval systems such as CompuServe, Dow Jones News Retrieval, and the Source eventually came under the "videotex" umbrella despite some debate about whether the text-only systems were in the same category as those services that provided graphics.[13]

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system is constructed whether with the necessary auxiliary equipment (amplifiers and passive devices) or with equipment that could easily be altered to provide return service. When offered, activation of the return service must always be at the subscriber's option. 36 FCC 2nd 143, 192-3 (1972).

[11]36 FCC 2nd 143, 192 (1972).

[12]Jerome Aumente, New Electronic Pathways: Videotex, Teletext, and On-line Databases (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1987) 127.

[13]Gary H. Arlen, "The Becoming of Videotex," Videotex '84 (New York: On-line Conferences, 1984) 2.

By 1986, the high-profile experiments in two-way cable television and in videotex in the United States were over. Warner-Amex suspended all Qube services but pay-per-view in 1984. Indax never went into commercial operation. Congress, in the Cable Communications Act of 1984, allowed cable companies to renegotiate franchise provisions for services including two-way transmission of signals,[14] but the fallout from cable systems' failures to provide negotiated services quieted cable-industry enthusiasm for interactive services for several years.[15] High-profile videotex experiments, Viewtron in Florida, and Times Mirror's Gateway in California, closed within six months of each other in 1986. Multi-million dollar losses on these projects also created a negative connotation for "videotex" in the newspaper publishing industry for several years.[16]

Even with the failure of these newspaper videotex systems, Sears, IBM, and CBS, in 1986, were forming a partnership, Trintex, for development of a computer on-line service. With the withdrawal of CBS, Trintex evolved into Prodigy. Expediting the development of on-line computer systems in the 1970s was the marketing of modulators-demodulators or modems that allowed conversion of digital computer data into analog signals for transmission along the telephone network. IBM, in 1981, began marketing its personal computer and moved from proprietary to open standards and interfaces. While IBM's intent was to facilitate development of software for the personal computer, the result was the production and marketing of lower-cost IBM clones that helped to speed the penetration of personal computers into homes.[17] Increasingly available home computers

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[14]47 US Code. §542 (1985).

[15]John M. Higgins, "Sorting Through the Hype of Interactive Multimedia," Multichannel News 29 Nov. 1993: 3.

[16]Michael Conniff, "Video Text Is a Terminal Case," Editor&Publisher 19 Dec. 1992: 23.

[17]Wilson Dizard, The Coming Information Age: An Overview of Technology, Economics, and Politics, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1985)115.

set the stage for a new wave of interactive enthusiasm in the 1990s but complicated the development of television-based interactive systems in the 1970s and 1980s.

New Environment

The communications environment in the United States was undergoing significant changes in the 1970s and 1980s. Entry of computers into communication services brought regulatory debate and acknowledgment of the changing nature of the US communications environment with the convergence of what traditionally were systems of mass communication and interpersonal communications and the growing role of computers in communications systems. Before the Modified Final Judgment in 1982, the Consent Decree of 1956 had barred AT&T from providing computer information services, specifically content on computer services.[18] The Modified Final Judgment, in 1984, transferred that restriction to the regional Bell operating companies and allowed AT&T to provide information services after a seven-year moratorium. Peter Huber, in his analysis of the effects of the AT&T break-up for the Department of Justice in 1987, contended that AT&T had accepted the Modified Final Judgment because of its understanding of the transition in the communications environment.[19] Communications consultant Jonathan Beacher, in 1984, explained AT&T had a grand strategy: "Why else would they have come to the US Department of Justice a couple of years ago and volunteered to get rid of the local phone companies, just so they'd be free to enter the computer market without being regulated?"[20] Huber also argued that the new structure of the regulated telephone system

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[18]The Consent Decree of 1956 was the culmination of an antitrust investigation of AT&T that had begun in the late 1940s. The decree did not bar AT&T from computer research and development or production of computer equipment. US v. AT&T, 552 F. Supp. 131, 138 (DDC 1982).

[19]Peter Huber, The Geodesic Network: Report on Controversy in the Telephone Industry. (Washington: GPO, 1987) 2.

[20]Jonathan Beacher, "The Best Kept Secrets of Videotex," Videotex '84 (New York: Online Conferences, 1984) 21.

resembled a "geodesic dome" of Buckminster Fuller rather than the integrated structure of AT&T's old "natural" telephone monopoly.[21] Eli Noam made a similar argument, in 1987, that the regulated telephone network was undergoing a transition from a centralized system to an open system with individual and independent points of access.[22] The views of Huber and Noam represent a model of participation that is not congregational or collective but nodal. Changes in the point-to-point communication network also brought new regulatory challenges and questions.

Regulation

The growing role of computers in communications was evident in regulatory decisions in the 1970s and 1980s. The FCC began to address regulation of computer services with "computer inquiries" in 1971, 1980, and 1986. The Modified Final Judgment, which guided the break-up of AT&T and went into effect in 1984, addressed the role that telephone companies would have in provision of information services and content for interactive communication systems.

Convergence of computer and telephone technologies has posed challenges for federal regulators, although the government has not regulated computers as communication devices. The US Department of Justice, after an antitrust investigation in the 1940s, moved to limit AT&T's involvement in the provision of computer services with the Consent Decree of 1956. In 1966 the FCC began its efforts to regulate the relationship of telephone and computer technologies and engaged in three separate "computer inquiry" rule-making efforts to address the convergence of those technologies.

The FCC's First Computer Inquiry, issued in 1971, provided that the agency would continue to regulate telephone service and would not regulate data-processing

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[21]Huber 2.

[22]Eli M. Noam, "The Public Telecommunications Network: A Concept in Transition," Journal of Communication 37.1 (1987): 30-48.

services. The FCC decided to handle "hybrid" cases of telecommunications and data processing on an individual basis. The First Computer Inquiry required that carriers that wanted to provide data-processing services would have to create autonomous subsidiaries for that purpose. Such carriers also would need to have $1 million in annual revenues, but the rule did not apply to AT&T or its subsidiaries because of the 1956 Consent Decree ban against AT&T's provision of information services.[23]

By 1980 the FCC decided to look to structural safeguards to allow AT&T's entry into data-processing services. Converging telephone and computer technologies had made impossible the drawing of an "enduring line of demarcation."[24] The Second Computer Inquiry provided for establishment of separate divisions with separate accounting systems for provision of "enhanced services." The FCC distinguished between "basic" services, which essentially are telephone services, and "enhanced services," which are computer-based services.[25] Computer technology plays some role in provision both of basic and enhanced services, but enhanced services involve some function beyond transmission of telephone messages.

In 1981, then-FCC Chairman Mark S. Fowler acknowledged that technological changes were proceeding so rapidly that "many of the former definitions of services are becoming blurred."[26] The Third Computer Inquiry, in 1986, brought new attention to interconnection, opening the regulated telephone network to all providers of enhanced or computer-based telephone services such as voice mail, monitoring of security alarms, and videotex, that the telephone network could accommodate. Goals of the initiative, which the

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[23]Third Computer Inquiry, 104 FCC 2d 961, 967 (1968).

[24]104 FCC 2d at 968.

[25] 104 FCC 2d at 968.

[26]Mark S. Fowler, Address, International Communications Association Telecommunication Conference Washington, DC, 1 June 1981.

Department of Justice supported, were efficiency and increased competition.[27] FCC officials indicated that the abandonment of requirements for separate subsidiaries needed to come because of changes in the telecommunications and computer-services marketplace.[28] As technologies had advanced, FCC officials had acknowledged that efforts to distinguish between these types of services were becoming more and more difficult.[29] Through a policy of "open network architecture" the Bell regional operating companies would open their networks to all competing companies that furnish enhanced services, would provide all enhanced services to all customers even if other telecommunications companies could use these services to build competing operations, and would provide interface information to facilitate interconnections.[30] Adoption of technical requirements for implementation of open network architecture remains voluntary, and implementation still is under way.

The agreement in 1982 to end the antitrust case between the Justice Department and AT&T ostensibly addressed the future of the regulation of point-to-point communication. The Modified Final Judgment, which went into effect in 1984, also transferred to the regional Bell operating companies the prohibition against provision of information services, specifically the provision of content for on-line services. Judge Harold Greene, who oversaw the break-up of AT&T, argued that the prohibition promoted diversity of voices because entry of the Bell companies into these services would preclude competition.[31] Greene initially declined to remove the 1956 Consent Decree's bar against the Bell companies' provision of information services, but he amended his order to allow their

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[27]Third Computer Inquiry, 104 FCC 2d 961, 963 (1986).

[28]Third Computer Inquiry, Notice of Proposed Rule-Making, 50 Fed. Reg. 33,581, 33,582 (1985).

[29]50 Fed. Reg., 33,581, 33,581.

[30]104 FCC 2d. 961, 963.

[31]US v. Western Electric, 900 F. 2d 283, 305 (DC Cir. 1992).

provision of such services on a common carrier basis with no generation of content. Despite support for the entry of the Bell regional operating companies into electronic publishing from AT&T and the Department of Justice, the parties in the original antitrust suit, Greene declined to give the Bell companies permission to engage in electronic publishing.

Greene held that "based on competitive regulations alone, therefore, the court might well be justified in barring Bell telephone companies from the electronic publishing industry. Beyond that, entry of the telephone companies into the electronic publishing market also poses a substantive danger to First Amendment values."[32] Greene stated that entry of telephone companies into electronic publishing "would be inimical to the objective of a competitive market, the purposes of the anti-trust laws, and the economic well-being of the American people."[33] A series of appeals court opinions reversed Greene's decision,[34] and the recently enacted Telecommunications Act of 1996 allows regional telephone companies full entry into information services.[35]

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[32]900 F. 2d at 305.

[33]US v. Western Electric 767 F. Supp. 308, 326 (DDC 1991).

[34]The US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit in 1992 overruled Greene's use of the most exacting public interest standard since both parties in the original antitrust suit, the Department of Justice and AT&T, had agreed to changes in the terms of the Modification of Final Judgment to allow entry of the Bell regional operating companies into information services and electronic publishing. The court noted the provisions of the Antitrust Procedures and Penalties (Tunney) Act that "a less demanding standard of review applies to an uncontested motion to modify a consent decree than applies to a contested one." US v. Western Electric, 900 F. 2d. 283, 305 (DC Cir. 1992). Greene removed the business restrictions in 1992 after he noted that he could not rule with "certainty" that the entry of regional Bell companies into electronic publishing would result in unfair competition. US v. Western Electric, 767 F. Supp. 308, 309 (DDC 1992). The Consumer Federation of America led an appeal of the decision on the basis that the Department of Justice's decision to support entry of the telephone companies into electronic publishing was without foundation. The US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit held in 1993 that the Department of Justice's decision was a "reasonable conclusion" on the basis of an "ample factual foundation." US v. Western Electric, 993 F. 2d 1572, 1582 (DC Cir. 1993). The US Supreme Court in November 1993, without comment, declined to review that ruling. Consumer Fedn. Am. v. US, 114 S. Ct. 487.

[35]Pub. L. No. 104-104 § 274 (1996).

Questions about the regulatory status of teletext, which involves use of broadcasting capacity to transmit data, arose in 1984 when application of the Fairness Doctrine on teletext campaign content became an issue. The Fairness Doctrine, which the FCC abolished in 1987, required presentation of opposing views on public issues.[36] The US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit held that teletext was an "ancillary service" to broadcasting, but did not have to meet the requirements of the Fairness Doctrine because such regulation might limit its full development as a communications medium.[37] The court held that the ruling did not apply to videotex, which uses telephone lines to transmit information to televisions and computer terminals.[38]

Regulation of cable television companies' provision of two-way or interactive services varied from the directive of the FCC's Third Report and Order, in 1972, to provide the technical capacity for two-way services to the Cable Communications Act of 1984 that relieved cable companies of the responsibility to install two-way transmission systems or other cable-franchise requirements under certain conditions. The act allowed cable companies to renegotiate franchises that included services that were "commercially impracticable" to provide.[39] Failure of the cable companies to meet franchise obligations helped to thwart interest in development of two-way cable television and other interactive combination systems.[40]

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[36]47 C.F.R. 73.1910 (1985).

[37]Telecommunications Research and Action (TRAC) v. FCC, 801 F. 2d. 501, 518 (DC Cir. 1986).

[38]801 F. 2d at 508.

[39]47 US Code. §545 (1985).

[40]"TV on a Platter," CD-ROM World April 1994:48.

Two-Way Cable Television

The 1970s had begun with enthusiastic projections of the benefits of cable television, including two-way transmission systems (See Chapter 5). Between 1972 and 1984, the federal government, public-interest groups, and cable companies sponsored large-scale tests of two-way television. Among those projects were three tests of delivery of social services, which the National Science Foundation funded, and the commercial Qube system in Columbus, Ohio. These projects did not provide fully interactive services. Although the use of coaxial cable could allow customers to send messages back to the point of origination of the cable transmission, provision of point-to-point communication as the telephone provides would have required switching facilities that were available to cable companies only on an experimental basis.[41]

Foundations and the government made substantial investments in the study of the use of cable television to address social problems and to meet community needs. The Rand Corporation began its research on cable television issues, including two-way transmission, in 1969, with grants from the Ford Foundation and the Markle Foundation. The National Science Foundation also asked the Rand Corporation to compile a cable handbook for local decision-making.[42] In 1970, the Sloan Foundation provided $500,000 for a study of the future of cable television, which resulted in the Sloan Commission report.[43] In 1971, the Markle Foundation provided $250,000 to New York University for creation of the Alternate Media Center, which studied community use of cable television.[44] In 1972, the

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[41]Jerry Ritchter, "Interactive Cable: History, Implications, and Prospects," Interactive Cable TV Handbook, 3rd ed. (Bethesda, MD: Phillips Publishing, 1983) 14.

[42]Walter S. Baer, Interactive Television: Prospects for Two-Way Services on Cable (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1971): iii.

[43]Monroe E. Price "The Illusions of Cable Television," Journal of Communication 24.3 (1974): 73.

[44]Ralph Engelman, The Origins of Public Access Cable Television, 1966-1972. Communication Monographs 123 (Columbia, SC: AEJMC, 1990) 17.

Markle Foundation gave the Mitre Corporation $700,000 to prepare a cable-system design for large cities as a first step toward developing a real "wired city."[45] The National Science Foundation in 1974 funded projects in Reading, Pennsylvania, $200,000; Rockford, Illinois, $400,000; and Spartanburg, South Carolina, $1.1 million; to test use of two-way television to provide social services. The Reading project, which the Alternate Media Center at New York University coordinated, involved services for senior citizens.[46] The Rockford project, which Michigan State University directed, provided job training services.[47] The Spartenburg project, under the supervision of the Rand Corporation, provided general education services.[48] Although the Rockford and Spartanburg projects ended after the grant period, a community organization, Berks Community Television took over operation of the Reading project, and it remains in operation.

Qube

Commercial experiments with two-way cable television began in Columbus, Ohio, in 1969;[49] in Dallas in 1970,[50] and in Kansas City in 1971.[51] Warner Cable, which became

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[45]William F. Mason, "Overview of CATV Developments in the US," Two-Way Cable Television: Experiences with Pilot Projects, in North America, Japan, and Europe, ed. Wolfgang A. Kaiser, Hans Marko, and Eberhard Witte (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1977) 65.

[46]Charles N. Brownstein, "Interactive Cable TV and Social Services," Journal of Communication 28.2 (1978): 142.

[47]Peter F. Clarke, F. Gerald Kline, Hazel Schumacher, and Susan Evans, "Rockford, Ill.: In-Service Training for Teachers," Journal of Communication 28.2 (1978): 195.

[48]Williams A. Lucas, "Spartanburg, S.C.: Testing the Effectiveness of Video, Voice, and Data Feedback," Journal of Communication 28.2 (1978): 168.

[49]Robin Jeffrey Brown, "Two-Way Cable Television: A Study of Experiments and Applications, Including Warner Communications Qube Project, Columbus, Ohio, 1977-78," thesis, Ohio State, 1978, 79-83.

[50]Brown 49-50.

[51]"Dialing Up a Dialogue on Cable: Kansas City System With Two-Way Terminal, Will Test Teaching and Shopping by CATV," Broadcasting 31 May 1971: 45.

Warner Amex in 1979 after American Express bought a share of the company, formally announced in February 1977 plans to begin a test of a two-way cable television system in Columbus, Ohio. The Warner cable system was one of several in Columbus, which has a reputation as a good Midwestern test market.[52] Coaxial Communications, which Warner acquired in 1980, had inaugurated two-way communication tests in Columbus with a pay-per-view system.[53] Although the Qube system was to offer two-way interaction with customers, Warner planned a series of tests since the system also included local programming, pay-per-view, and programming for target audiences.[54] Qube service began in Columbus in December 1977.

All Qube subscribers received a console with five response buttons for program selection or participation in viewer-choice options.[55] Qube provided thirty channels including commercial television stations, community channels, premium pay channels, consumer information, and college courses. Local programs included "Columbus Alive," a variety and talk show, and "Flippo's Magic Circus" and "Pinwheel," children's shows. Also available were first-run movies and an adult-film channel.[56] One observer of Qube was optimistic, in 1978, for the future of two-way television: "With further development of two-way cable television as it exists in 1978 it is feasible that two-way cable television could be a fourth major television network."[57]

Two-way services that were available included fire and security alarms. Two-way options for customers included market testing, picking football plays, judging a boxing

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[52]Brown 87.

[53]Brown 79.

[54]Brown 87-93.

[55]Brown 87.

[56]Wayne Walley, "The Lessons of Qube; Pioneers Say It Led the Way," Electronic Media 16 Aug. 1993: 1.

[57]Brown 133.

match, choosing an ending for a movie, picking a magazine cover, and expressing views on social and issues.[58] Reactions to presidential speeches generated some controversy. Such "polling," as the reaction measure was called, brought criticism at the time because of the size of the audience involved and the lack of randomness in the procedures.[59] Despite the diversity of services and programming, the options of two-way cable television prompted some concern. New York Times critic Janet Maslin, in 1982, described the Qube environment as a "nightmare" because of the extension of television passivity to other activities.[60]

Marketing Tool

Whatever their limitations, two-way systems provided a marketing tool for cable television companies seeking franchises. Although the FCC in 1972 eased restrictions on cable system expansion into urban markets (See Chapter 5), satellite transmission of programming spurred urban growth as did interest in public-interest and business services. A Broadcasting headline indicated that the urban "gold rush" for cable television franchises began in 1980.[61] Cities included requirements for two-way systems and extended channel capacities in their requests for proposals.[62] Broadcasting magazine also noted in 1980 that franchise interest included public-interest concerns: "Part of the rush to franchise in the cities is being generated from within, with little or no prompting from the cable operators.

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[58]Janet Maslin, "Television Scrutinized," New York Times 12 Feb. 1982, fnl. ed.: 34C.

[59]Don Shirley, "Criticism of the Columbus Poll," Washington Post 17 July 1979, natl. ed.: 2B; Edward Meadows, "Why TV Sets Do More in Columbus, Ohio," Fortune 6 Oct. 1980: 67-8.

[60]Maslin 34C.

[61]"The Gold Rush of 1980: Prospecting for Cable Franchises," Broadcasting 31 May 1980: 35-36.

[62]Michael Wines, "Cable Companies Fall Victim to Overpromises, Competition for Viewers," National Journal 18 Feb. 1984: 314.

Many public interest groups are interested in the idea of local access programming, another key feature of almost all cable franchise proposals."[63] Analysts again contended that cable television could enhance the sense of community. Small communities, large communities, or segments of large communities could have their own cable television programs and a two-way communication system: "The medium of cable television itself will transform the social and political processes. It is a technological revolution almost unsurpassed in possible effects and impact."[64]

Within a few years, Warner had won approval to install Qube systems in Cincinnati, Dallas, Houston, St. Louis, Milwaukee, and Pittsburgh.[65] Warner initiated a two-way network to serve all of its Qube systems in May 1983, but that service ended only a few months later in 1984. Warner had the only commercial two-way television system in operation, but Cox Cable, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, attempted to compete for franchises with its Indax system.[66] Cox Cable conducted tests of Indax in San Diego, California, and won approval to install Indax in Omaha, Nebraska; New Orleans, and Vancouver, Washington. Cox failed to get any of those systems in operation.

Bail-out

Failure to provide those two-way cable television services resulted in threats of litigation from cities and lawsuits from citizens who challenged the franchises.[67] Cable companies, by 1984, had begun to question the soundness of investments for two-way

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[63]"Gold Rush" 36.

[64]James C. Shrouse, The Mass Media, Public Opinion and Public Policy Analysis: Linkage Explorations (Columbus, OH: Merrill, 1975) 265.

[65]Dizard 98.

[66]"Cox Cable's Wright: Building the Future," Broadcasting 1 Nov. 1982: 87.

[67]Wines 315.

services: "The mood of the cable industry has changed so much that no cable company would now offer anything other than a basic system in a major city."[68] Cities also had the option to sell problem franchises to other companies. When TCI proposed, in 1984, to acquire the Pittsburgh franchise from Warner, TCI President John Malone indicated that his company would remove the "Rube Goldberg" or Qube equipment.[69] Cable Vision magazine, in January, 1985, listed "major concessions won by cable operators" during 1983 and 1984 as Warner Amex's deferring of construction of Qube in Milwaukee and Cox's deferring of Indax construction in Omaha, Tucson, and Vancouver, Washington. Other cities that gave concessions to cable television companies were Portland, Oregon; Los Angeles, Denver, Dallas, and Pittsburgh.[70]

Time Warner curtailed its Qube operations in Columbus except for pay-per-view in January 1984 as cable companies sought to find relief from franchise requirements for two-way systems and greater channel diversity.[71] Congress in 1984 approved the Cable Communications Policy Act that essentially deregulated the cable industry. Among the provisions of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 was a clause that allowed cable companies to renegotiate franchises that included services that were "commercially impracticable" to provide.[72] The House report on the act blamed both the cities and the cable companies for the failure of cable companies to meet franchise requirements:

> Faced with stiff competition for franchises, some cable operators simply overpromised and oversold in the franchise process...Cities likewise were caught

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[68]D. Stevens McVoy and Thomas F. Baldwin, "Interactive Cable TV: Technology, Applications, and Markets," The Interactive Cable TV Handbook, 4th ed. (Bethesda, MD: Phillips Publishing, 1984) 8.

[69]"Qube Service To Be Dropped If TCI Buys Warner Amex's Pittsburgh System," Broadcasting 16 Apr. 1984: 84.

[70]Sally Russell, "Scalebacks: Will They Do The Job?" Cable Vision 14 Jan. 1985: 29.

[71]James Peltz, "Qube Two-Way TV Falls Victim to Apathy," Washington Post 19 Jan. 1984: 3B.

[72]47 US Code. §545 (1985).

> up in the 'blue sky' potential of cable. Cities began to seek greater system capacity, more public access facilities and support, and one- and two-way communications systems for school and municipal offices, often at minimal or no direct charge to the government.[73]

Passage of the act, in October 1984, followed months of negotiations between representatives of the National League of Cities and the National Cable Television Association on the appropriate role of municipalities in regulation of cable systems. City officials argued that Congress was limiting municipal authority over cable systems[74] and that municipalities needed authority to enforce franchise requirements: "The need for local authority is to represent the interests of the community in awarding bids to assure that the successful bidder lives up to commitments."[75] The cable industry countered that the proposed legislation would protect cities from the FCC's pre-emption of all authority for cable-TV regulation: "The big question looming for cities, as the clock ticks on, is whether Congress will be allowed to enact a final version (of cable television regulations) fast enough to preserve local cable authority before the FCC pre-empts that authority.[76] Some cable executives chose not to assume full responsibility for franchise shortcomings and blamed the failure to provide advanced interactive services on high expectations of cities and the promotion of such interactive services by government and public-interest groups.[77] The National Science Foundation projects provided examples: "These well-publicized public service applications led urban governments, then in the process of franchising, to

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[73]House Comm. on Energy and Commerce, Cable Franchise Policy and Communications Act of 1984, H.R. Rep. No. 934, 98th Cong., 2nd sess. 21 (1984).

[74]Alan Beals, "Cities' Argument Centers on Need for Local Control," American City & County May 1984: 45. Beals was executive director of the National League of Cities.

[75]Beals 47.

[76]Thomas E. Wheeler, "Cable TV Stance Pushes Legislation Over FCC Rule," American City & County May 1984: 48. Wheeler was president of the National Cable Television Association.

[77]Kevin Maney, "Gus Hauser's Qube Set Cable's Stage," USA Today 16 Aug. 1993, fnl. ed.: 4B.

expect operational two-way systems. The cable companies complied, entering bidding wars, with each company trying to outdo the other in offering elaborate two-way systems."[78]

In 1980, a Broadcasting report on a NCTA convention noted that the cable industry suffered from credibility problems because of past promises:

> To some cable operator veterans it might have seemed like a scene out of the 1960s or early 1970s. There was talk of two-way interactive services cable could offer subscribers, and of burglar and fire alarm systems. It was all so much 'blue sky' then, and it opened a credibility gap the cable industry hasn't completely bridged yet. But this time – at a session of the NCTA convention last week – those doing the talking were, it seemed, really serious.[79]

D. Stevens McVoy and Thomas F. Baldwin contended, in 1984, that development of two-way cable television services was progressing then at a rational pace: "Interactive, two-way cable television has passed through its promotional stage, which was based on hyper-enthusiasm for its prospects and the need to present a dramatic communications technology in the quest for franchises."[80]

Although cable companies were competing against each for franchises, they were aware of other competition for two-way or interactive services. Cable companies particularly were aware of the challenge of AT&T: "[C]able is up against some much bigger industries, such as AT&T, with a tradition of large-scale research and development. These competitors have the resources to subsidize development over a long period of time and survive some failures."[81] The Interactive Cable TV Handbook for 1984 listed the following two-way services and the number of systems providing them: institutional networks, seventy-three; data and/or voice transmission, thirty-eight; information retrieval, seven; pay-per-view or polling, sixteen; monitoring of utility meters or traffic signals,

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[78]McVoy and Baldwin 8.

[79]"Greater Sense of Security for Cable," Broadcasting 26 May 1980: 48.

[80]McVoy and Baldwin 5.

[81]McVoy and Baldwin 17.

seven; remote alphanumeric transmission; fifteen; security, fifty-five; and teleconferencing, thirteen.[82] McVoy and Baldwin suggested that full success for two-way services would require some good fortune: "If each of these services were to prove effective, and find a consumer market at about the same time, then the entire cable industry could quickly aggregate these services and build the administrative and marketing structure to fully exploit the technology."[83]

For most of the rest of the decade the cable industry, with the closing of Qube and renegotiation of urban franchises, downplayed any involvement with interactive services.[84] Gustave Hauser, who left as chairman and chief executive officer of Warner Amex before the closing of Qube, failed to win advancement from vice chairman to chairman of the National Cable Television Association in 1984, and Broadcasting reported that the snub was the result of the company overselling cable services to win franchises.[85] The magazine quoted unnamed NCTA board members as indicating the decision was a cable industry statement: "It [the industry] is concerned about the image of the industry as one whose members make 'blue sky' promises in competing for franchises, and then renege under the pressure of real-life business conditions."[86] Hauser downplayed the connection between franchise battles and his failure to win the post and told Broadcasting that "financial analysts, government officials, and the press share responsibility for the hype" that led to the unmet franchise commitments.[87]

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[82]The Interactive Cable TV Handbook, 4th ed. (Bethesda, MD: Phillips Publishing, 1984) 37-41.

[83]McVoy and Baldwin 17.

[84]Higgins 3.

[85]"Allen Surprise Choice as NCTA Chairman," Broadcasting 9 Apr. 1984: 34.

[86]"Surprise Choice" 34.

[87]"Surprise Choice" 35.

Tests of interactive services for cable television did not stop with the demise of Qube. Timothy Hollins, in 1984, was circumspect about the future of interactive communications: "The wired society will come, but rather more gradually, hesitantly and with many more pitfalls along the way than the public relations 'hype' of the last few years would have us believe."[88] GTE, an independent telephone company, began conducting tests in Cerritos, California, in 1979 to determine consumer interest in interactive services available through both cable television and telephone connections.[89] The telephone company's provision of cable television services on an experimental basis resulted in legal challenges from the National Cable Television Association.[90] Renewal of interest in interactive cable television has come in the 1990s amid projections of cable systems with five-hundred channels, proposals for telephone services through cable-television systems, and establishment of a standard for high-definition television.[91] By 1995, even Time Warner, a corporate descendent of Warner Amex, was ready to begin another test of interactive television, the Full Service Network, in Florida.[92] Passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 allows the cable television industry fully into the provision of telephone services as well as allowing regional Bell operating companies to provide television services.[93]

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[88]Timothy Hollins, Beyond Broadcasting: Into the Cable Age (London: BFI Publishing, 1984) 138.

[89]Ted Hearn, "GTE First Telco To Lose in Court on Cable Service," Multichannel News 7 Nov. 1994: 46.

[90]GTE California v. FCC, 39 F. 3rd. 940, 942 (9th Cir. 1994).

[91]Joseph Segal, "The Information Superhighway: Separating Hype from Reality," Direct Marketing Feb. 1994: 18.

[92]Frank Ruiz, "Interactive Television Just Around the Corner," Tampa Tribune 5 June 1995: 3.

[93]Pub. L. No. 104-104 § 653 (1996).

Videotex

The Qube tests in Columbus, Ohio, were part of an overall effort early in the early 1980s to use television sets as the monitors for interactive services. Videotex, which had its origins in Great Britain and its most successful application in France, actually represents a somewhat different platform. Early videotex systems used telephone lines to transmit information and services to television sets (hence "video" tex) on a two-way basis. The British Post Office developed Ceefax, a teletext system, and Prestel, a videotex system, in the 1970s. Teletext, which uses the vertical blanking interval of television broadcasting to display pages of text, provides no interactive services to users. The Prestel system provided 165,000 pages of data by 1979.[94] France's Minitel system had the greatest penetration because the French telephone authority used the videotex system to replace its telephone book. Each telephone customer received a Minitel terminal, at no cost.[95] Several other nations developed videotex projects, including Canada, Telidon; Germany, Bildschirmtext; and Japan, Captain.[96]

US videotex experiments such as Knight-Ridder's Viewtron and Times Mirror's Gateway required used of the AT&T Sceptre terminal to perform functions and order services. Viewtron made 18,000 information pages available to several thousand users in South Florida.[97] Viewtron offered news, weather, sports, product ratings and lists of adult education classes. Users also could make airline and theater reservations and

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[94]Anthony Smith, Goodbye Gutenberg: The Newspaper Revolution of the 1980s (New York: Oxford UP, 1980, 257.

[95]Aumente 93.

[96]Richard M. Neustadt, The Birth of Electronic Publishing: Legal and Economic Issues in Telephone, Cable, and Over-the-Air Teletext and Videotex (White Plains, NY: Knowledge Industry Publications, 1982) 21-2.

[97]Neustadt 19.

read classified advertisements.[98] Later experiments with the early videotex systems involved some computer use. Videotex promoters acknowledged, by 1984, that the generic "videotex" that included computer time-sharing systems had succeeded the television-based systems.[99] IBM released its PC in 1981, but the newspaper videotex systems were not able to adapt quickly enough.[100] By April 1984, a videotex consultant told Broadcasting magazine: "We in the videotex industry are indeed searching for the promised land, and those who have thus far stumbled along the way are seeking redemption, if not resurrection."[101] The comment came during the Videotex '84 trade show in Chicago in April 1984. Participants in the Videotex '85 conference indicated that videotex was moving from the consumer market to the business market since "the consumer market continues to flounder."[102] Although interactive services, including CompuServe, Trintex, and Dow Jones News Retrieval, continued to provide computer-related services, the failure of Viewtron, at a loss of some $50 million, and of Gateway, at a loss of some $30 million, turned the term "videotex," particularly in the newspaper industry, into an epithet. The managing editor of Times Mirror's Gateway project, in 1994, described the videotex experience as a "debacle."[103]

The Bubble Bursts

Interest in cable television and particularly in its capability for two-way transmission of information swelled at two different times during the 1960s, 1970s, and

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[98]Neustadt 19, 23.

[99]Lee R. Greenhouse, "Prospect and Retrospect: What's Changed in the Electronic Services Business," Videotex '84 (New York: On-line Conferences, 1984) 28.

[100]Larry Pryor, "The Videotex Debacle," American Journalism Review Nov. 1994: 42.

[101]"Videotex Industry Searches for Salvation," Broadcasting 23 April 1984: 40.

[102]"The Changing Priorities of Videotex," Broadcasting 1 July 1985: 64.

[103]Pryor 41-2.

1980s. Public-interest groups, as they had during the 1920s (See Chapter 4), promoted cable television as a means to address social problems and to provide individuals with a greater role in communications. During the same period, cable television companies faced two distinct challenges. The first was to gain entry of cable systems into the one-hundred largest television markets in the United States. The second challenge, for individual cable companies, was to win franchises in these urban areas.

The cable television industry could claim greater channel capacity and the capabilities for narrowcasting and two-way transmission of signals as advantages over broadcasting as it sought a separate identity in the 1970s. Cable critics contended that the industry only was providing the same fare as television broadcasting and at a cost to customers. Cable officials indicated that only with franchises in the largest markets could they generate enough revenue to proceed with a "communication revolution" of two-way services and diverse programming fare. The Federal Communications Commission addressed the first challenge with the Third and Report Order in 1972, which provided limited relief for cable companies. The cable companies could enter all but the fifty largest television markets. At issue was the import of distant signals, and the use of satellites to deliver first-run movies, sports, superstations, and original programming, by the late 1970s, made the distant-signal issue moot. Home Box Office began distributing movies to cable channels in 1975. In 1977, the FCC lowered the requirement for earth-station dishes from a diameter of ten meters to a diameter of four and one-half meters, reducing the cost from $100,000 to approximately $25,000.[104] In 1977, a federal appeals court also struck down the FCC's restrictions on pay television.[105] The Third Report and Order also required new cable systems to include the capacity for two-way transmission of signals.

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[104]Patrick Parsons, Cable Television and the First Amendment (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books: 1987) 22.

[105]HBO Inc. v. FCC, 567 F.2d. 9 (DC Cir. 1977).

In the second stage of industry interest in two-way systems, individual companies used promises of two-way services and channel diversity to meet city franchise requirements and to win those franchises. Failure to meet those agreements resulted in lawsuits, acrimony between cities and cable company executives, and congressional action to allow cable companies to withdraw from those commitments. Warner Amex shut down its Qube systems and deferred installation of others, and Cox Cable failed to bring its two-way system, Indax, into commercial use in any city.

Entry of newspaper chains into videotex services was the result of industry concerns about its competitive position in the new communications environment. Newspapers were facing competition from television and cable television and videotex apparently was making headway in Europe and other parts of the world. Customers were not ready for the new services and the technologies to provide them, according to eventual subscriber rates.[106]

Interactive Failures

Gateway, Viewtron, and Qube resulted in total losses of more than $100 million for their owners and have been characterized as interactive failures.[107] Some Qube supporters deny this characterization and indicate that the experiments in Columbus, Ohio, spawned the "Nickelodeon" and "MTV" cable channels, served as a test-bed for several innovative television services, and provided a creative environment that produced leadership for the cable industry.[108] Analyses of Qube and the high-profile newspaper videotex projects indicate several factors in their termination. These included consumer resistance, high costs of services, and lack of market demand; privacy and regulatory issues, particularly in

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[106]Michael Conniff, "The Dinosaur is Starting to Dance," Editor&Publisher 6 Mar. 1993: 6TC.

[107]Michael Murriee, "Interactive Television," Quill Mar. 1994: 28.

[108]Sharon Moshavi, "Fire Sale," Forbes 8 Nov. 1993: 96.

regard to the role of AT&T and the regional Bell companies in interactive services; technology limitations, and unrealistic expectations.

Consumer Resistance

Cable executives, in 1984, acknowledged low penetration of two-way cable television services, low revenue from two-way services, and high construction costs.[109] Qube participants represented a small percentage of Warner Amex customers.[110] Cable two-way services generated limited interest: "The utility of most services is probably marginal for most consumer, since there are close substitutes for some of the two-way services. As a result, each one of the services...attracts only a small percentage of the cable subscribers."[111]

Executives of videotex companies acknowledged that they were attempting to create a market for their programs and services in competition with other entertainment and information providers.[112] Larry Pryor of Times Mirror indicated that Gateway could not find a niche with use of television or computer: "The 'critical mass' necessary to create an electronic village never materialized because the decoder boxes (for television) were difficult to use. Then, when we discarded the boxes and appealed exclusively to computer owners, we ended up with a subscriber base heavily populated by techies, not exactly a village that non-computer types wanted to visit."[113] Costs of equipment for videotex also proved prohibitive with an initial cost of $900 for Sceptre terminals for the Viewtron and

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[109]McVoy and Baldwin 8.

[110]Sally Bedell Smith, "Two-Way Cable TV Falters," New York Times 28 Mar. 1984, fnl. ed.: 25C.

[111]McVoy and Baldwin 17.

[112]"Videotex Industry Searches for Salvation," Broadcasting 23 Apr. 1984: 41.

[113]Pryor 42.

Gateway systems, reduced to $600.[114] Knight-Ridder officials cited two miscalculations in the failure of Viewtron: consumer resistance to the Sceptre terminals and overestimation of the market for on-line services.[115]

High Technology Business reported, in 1988, that Knight-Ridder had discovered that market researchers "were living in a fantasy world."[116] The magazine noted 1983 predictions that "sales of videotex equipment and services would expand more than 90% annually, reaching $7 billion by 1987."[117] A. Michael Noll, a former AT&T executive, contended, in 1992, that inadequate market research resulted both in the failure of AT&T's picturephone project in the early 1970s and the Viewtron experiment, for which AT&T provided terminals:

> The videotex service was launched and had acquired a life of its own; nothing could halt its progress. Only when real consumers showed little interest in parting with real money for the videotex service did Knight-Ridder cancel the service. In fairness to AT&T, other companies and projects have followed similar fates. Somehow trials and market studies cannot be performed objectively within large corporations.[118]

Videotex and teletext also were emerging amid a number of technological developments with promises of entertainment and information:

> [T]rying to position videotex and teletext in the market place becomes especially difficult when one takes account of such rapidly changing technologies as the video disc, which can store thousands of pages of information; satellite-to-home service; personal computers; electronic home surveillance and security; fibre optics; electronic video games; electronic mail and electronic funds transfer.[119]

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[114] Aumente 55-6.

[115] Aumente 55.

[116] Herb Brody, "Sorry, Wrong Number," High Technology Business Sep. 1988: 25.

[117] Brody 25.

[118] A. Michael Noll, "Anatomy of a Failure: Picturephone Revisited," Telecommunications Policy 16 (1992): 316.

[119] Michael Nylan, Robert Johansen, and Robert Plummer, "The USA," Viewdata in Action: A Comparative Study of Prestel, ed. Rex Winsbury (London: McGraw-Hill, 1981) 216.

Privacy

Resistance to use of videotex services may have had some relation to privacy concerns for misuse of videotex data and records of service use: "In the hands of a marketer, the data can lead to annoying privacy invasion; in the hands of a totalitarian government or unscrupulous employer it could mean a person's career or personal freedom."[120] Critical studies of the legal and ethical ramifications of interactive communication systems, in the early 1980s, included John Wicklein's Electronic Nightmare[121] and Vincent Mosco's Pushbutton Fantasies.[122] Of particular interest were privacy and the concentration of ownership of interactive services and data repositories. Wicklein questioned the danger of interactive communication in that information also goes back to the institutional source: "Anyone who runs a computerized, two-way communication system has a magnificent tool with which to invade our privacy." Mosco contended that videotex was a tool to extend "mass society" (see Chapter 5) into the home: "The power of videotex to isolate and monitor small groups, indeed, individual subscribers, refines the audience production process. It opens the potential to combine mass-appeal broadcast-like channels with specialized narrow-casting to deliver audiences of all sorts."[123]

Warner Amex, in 1982, created a code of privacy for its Qube system. The code provided that individual viewing or responses would remain private unless customers received notification of the opportunity not to participate in a collection of such information: "Data of a general nature may be developed by the company concerning subscriber services

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[120]Aumente 127.

[121]John Wicklein, Electronic Nightmare: The New Communications and Freedom (New York: Viking, 1981).

[122]Vincent Mosco, Pushbutton Fantasies: Critical Perspective on Videotex and Information Technology (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1982).

[123]Mosco 105.

for use in developing new services or improving existing services. Such 'bulk data' may be made available to third parties as long as the identity of individual subscribers is not ascertainable from the data provided."[124]

The Qube system and increasing use of computers brought warnings in the early 1980s about loss of privacy. In 1981, TV Guide warned that "Cable TV Could Be the Peeping Tom of the '80s."[125] Fred Graham, the legal correspondent for CBS, advised that "any cable that brings television signals into your home has the capacity to carry signals the other way."[126] In 1982, US News and World Report asked, "Who Is Watching You?" and warned: "Five years after a presidential panel warned of increasing threats to privacy in the United States, Americans face greater dangers than ever before, thanks to inaction by Congress and the relentless march of technology."[127] Changing Times, in 1983, also warned of "The High-Tech Threat To Your Privacy."[128] The magazine noted the Warner Amex privacy code was in place to help protect the privacy of Qube customers, but indicated that "interest in privacy protection laws on a national scale is practically nil in Washington."[129] Congress included provisions of the Warner Amex privacy code in the Cable Communications Act of 1984.[130] John M. Wegner, in 1985, urged continued attention to privacy questions as interactive systems evolved:

> Inadequacies in present legal safeguards coupled with potential abuses of these media should be enough to order a course for action. To embark on a course of

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[124]"Warner Releases Two-Way Cable Code of Privacy," Broadcasting 4 Jan. 1982: 83.

[125]Fred Graham, "Cable TV Could Be the Peeping Tom of the '80s," TV Guide 4 July 1981: 30.

[126]Graham 30.

[127]Ted Gest and Patricia M. Scherschel, "Who Is Watching You?" US News and World Reports 12 July 1982: 34.

[128]"The High-Tech Threat to Your Privacy," Changing Times April 1983: 61.

[129]"High Tech Threat" 62-3.

[130]47 US Code. § 551 (1995).

inaction is to ignore the very real possibility that technological advancements will be exploited for unethical purposes.[131]

Regulatory Environment

Factors in the promotion of cable television and particularly two-way cable television involved an ongoing debate about the public-interest responsibilities of communications media, the social and political environment of the era, and efforts of the cable industry to gain regulatory and economic advantages. Although initial efforts of the cable industry were to gain regulatory advantage over established television broadcasting interests, the break-up of AT&T in 1984 raised questions about the roles of AT&T and the regional Bell companies in providing interactive services. The television broadcasting, cable television, and telephone industries, in the 1970s and 1980s, were aware of the coming competition and the future effects that integration with computer technology would bring.

Telephony, a trade publication for the telephone industry, headlined its coverage of the FCC Third Order and Report in 1972 with the requirement for two-way transmission capabilities.[132] Broadcasting and cable executives particularly were interested in the terms of the Modified Final Judgment, which went into effect in 1984 and which limited the regional Bell operating companies from providing information services. Anne W. Branscomb, in 1977, indicated that hopes for cable television seemed misdirected since use or modernization of the telephone system could realize the "blue sky visions of the cable

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[131]John M. Wegner, "Home Interactive Media: An Analysis of Potential Abuses of Privacy," Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media 29 (1985): 62.

[132]Victor Block, "FCC's Cable TV Ruling Provides Two-Way Communications Option." Telephony 14 Feb. 1972: 11.

enthusiasts."[133] William F. Mason, technical director of the Mitre Corporation, in 1977, indicated that "blue sky" was a broad term: "Any 'service' that required more than a video tape, in a broadcast mode, was considered 'blue sky' – the code word for ideas that are not commercially attractive."[134] Mason, as Branscomb, noted that the telephone network could provide an interactive future:

> Next year's microprocessors will offer even more services in the home and it now seems likely that any service that requires a two-way cable system will be even harder to finance than it might have been before microprocessors developed. We may yet see the 'smart terminal' approach, networked in a cable system, but it now seems more likely that the telephone system will provide the universal networking once associated with 'blue sky' predictions."[135]

Qube became synonymous with two-way cable television, but the Columbus, Ohio, experiments included a series of tests including local programming, pay-per-view, and home services including security. New media, in the 1970s, included cable television and two-way cable television. By the 1980s, broadcasting and cable television executives and regulators faced an alphabet soup of competitive technologies, DBS, direct broadcasting satellite; LPTV, low-power TV; SMATV, satellite master antenna television, PPV pay-per-view; STV, subscription TV; and MMDS, multi-point, multi-modal distribution systems, better known as "wireless cable."

Regulatory uncertainty may have worked to undermine interest in the development of interactive services since providers were not certain under which regulatory model they would fall.[136] US government policies have dealt with each communications medium individually. As US Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson wrote in 1949 in a concurring opinion on regulation of sound-truck advertising: "The moving picture screen,

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[133]Anne W. Branscomb, "The Cable Fable: Will It Come True?" Journal of Communication 25.1 (1975): 53.

[134]Mason 66.

[135]Mason 71.

[136]Nyhan, Johansen, and Plummer 215-6.

the radio, the newspaper, the handbill, the sound truck, and the street corner orator have differing natures, values, abuses, and dangers. Each, in my view, is a law unto itself..."[137] The US Supreme Court adopted that viewpoint in Burstyn v. Wilson in 1952,[138] and in Red Lion Broadcasting v. FCC in 1968 held "that differences in the characteristics of new media justify differences in the First Amendment standards applied to them."[139] New media now provide simultaneous transmission of voice, data, and images. Regulatory reaction to convergence of media technologies remains unclear as litigation continues in regard to the proper regulatory framework for cable television, now more than thirty years old.[140]

Convergence of telephone, computer, and television technologies in new "information services" brought into question development of uniform communications policies for providers of such services. Federal regulation of media generally has involved three models – print media, common carrier, and broadcasting –[141] and individual approaches to First Amendment protections. Communications scholar Ithiel de Sola Pool in 1983, for example, questioned whether convergence of technologies might even undermine First Amendment rights of newspapers: "Will public interest regulation, such as the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) applies, begin to extend over the conduct of the print media as they increasingly use regulated electronic means of dissemination?"[142]

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[137]Kovacs v. Cooper, 336 US 77, 97 (1949).

[138]343 US 495, 502 (1952).

[139]395 US 367, 386 (1968).

[140]*See* Turner Broadcasting System v. FCC, 819 F. Supp. 32 (1993).

[141]Ithiel de Sola Pool, Technologies of Freedom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983) 2.

[142]Pool, Technologies 451.

Technology Limitations

Even as two-way television systems and newspaper videotex systems were going into operation, technological advances were raising questions about their efficiency. A former official of the Times Mirror videotex project indicated, in 1994, that the use of telephone lines for videotex delivery brought complaints that the service tied up subscribers' phones, that the terminal was difficult to use, that the service provided only limited interactivity, and that the service's computer system was unreliable.[143] Personal computers, with multiple uses, became more attractive for interactive services than televisions and dedicated terminals, for use only with specific videotex system: "Videotex operators who had built their systems around single-use videotex terminals faltered while on-line services aimed at PC users thrived."[144]

Although the Qube system and the newspaper videotex systems allowed users to make programming and information choices, customers could not easily communicate with each other. The Qube system only allowed customers to make program choices or to respond to polls or market surveys; they could not initiate communications with the cable system or with the other users.[145] James W. Roman, in 1983, contended that consumers were not comfortable with terminals for interactive services: "If cable subscribers are to become receptive to interactive technology, they must have access to a home interface terminal that is as easy to use as a push button telephone."[146] Jerome Aumente, in 1987, contended that the centralized organization of the early videotex trial was unfeasible,

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[143]Pryor 42.

[144]Aumente 11.

[145]McVoy and Baldwin 5-6.

[146]James W. Roman, Cable Mania: The Cable Television Sourcebook (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983) 38.

particularly with the growing ownership of personal computers: "It was a shift from the top-down, classic videotex systems with central control by a single operator to more distributed systems, gateways for many information and transactional providers, and the realization that PC owners would tap in to many different on-line services, not remain the exclusive property of a single videotex system operator."[147]

Unrealistic Expectations

Predictions of "wired cities" and a "wired nation" helped to win government support for cable growth (See Chapter 5) and to guide cities' requirements for cable franchises, but these expectations fell short. Projections of availability and benefits of interactive services exceeded the capabilities of competing companies to provide those services. Ronald E. Jacobson, in 1977, contended that the cable industry had built its successes on deceit: "The misrepresentations of cable entrepreneurs in the early years of cable development have succeeded in casting public doubt and suspicion upon its potential, now labeled 'blue sky.' The notion that public services would be obtained from the private cable industry was a deceit used to secure lucrative franchises (to be traded away to the highest bidder)."[148] James W. Carey and John J. Quirk suggested, in 1973, that optimism about the social benefits of communications technology was not new: "Unfortunately the vision of democracy by electricity has been with us since at least the telegraph and the telephone and has been put forward by most writers about the future over the last century. But it is also obvious that the extraordinary demands made on the

[147]Aumente 45.

[148]Robert E. Jacobson, Municipal Control of Cable Communications (New York: Praeger, 1977) 61).

citizen by such a system would merely co-opt him into the technical apparatus with only the illusion of control."[149]

In 1974, Monroe Price even questioned the quality of research about the social ramifications of cable television: "The frank answer, after five years of research in the United States, is that we do not know. Much of the existing research, the product of foundation grants, is largely anecdotal."[150] Price contended that cable television would provide "probably more entertainment but no great solutions to human problems."[151] Federal Communications Commissioner Abbott Washburn, in 1976, told a researcher about his disappointment with cable television expectations:

> This really has been the unhappy part of cable's development in that it hasn't brought anything new. We all had such visions and indeed the industry had such visions of two-way communications...Everybody was hoping this would go. I think that was a general misimpression that this thing was going to take off in all kinds of new directions...Everyone was in love with a dream.[152]

Communication Futures

In 1962, Marshall McLuhan updated and merged the notions of *Gemeinschaft* (see Chapter 4) and of the effect of simultaneous receipt of broadcasting messages with his pronouncement of the "global village": "(T)he electro-magnetic discoveries have recreated the simultaneous 'field' in all human affairs so that the human family now exists under conditions of a 'global village.' We live in a single constricted space resonant with tribal

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[149]James W. Carey, and John J. Quirk, "The History of the Future," Communications Technology and Social Policy: Understanding the New "Cultural Revolution," ed. George Gerbner, Larry P. Gross, and William H. Melody (New York: Wiley, 1973) 499.

[150]Price 73.

[151]Price 76.

[152]Dean M. Krugman, "FCC Commissioner, Legal Assistant, and Staff Perceptions of Cable TV," Journalism Quarterly 56 (1979): 6.

drums."[153] In 1987, Jerome Aumente saw an evolution of McLuhan's vision: "The global village that Marshall McLuhan once saw bound together by the commonality of instantly shared television news was rapidly becoming an interactive village of computer and telecommunications technology."[154]

Only fourteen years after McLuhan introduced the idea of the "global village," commentators were declaring its demise.[155] At issue was the development of communication systems that targeted specific audiences rather than appealing to the general public. Cable television with its channel capacity and video-tape recordings offered an appeal to select audiences as did two-way cable television and videotex services. Television broadcasting networks could no longer dominate the viewing audiences.[156] New communications technologies also held the promise of further decentralizing the communications environment. Ithiel de Sola Pool, in 1973, contended that "individualized" communication might compete with mass communication:

> Now new communications technologies have appeared on the horizon that may reverse the trend toward uniformity in communication and thereby help close the gap of alienation. The communication technologies based on the computer, the video recorder, and cable TV promise to permit individualized communication to become economically competitive with mass communication.[157]

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[153]Marshall McLuhan, The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1962) 31.

[154]Aumente 11.

[155]*See* James E. Grunig, ed., Decline of the Global Village: How Specialization is Changing the Mass Media (Bayside, NY: General Hall, 1976).

[156]George Comstock and Haejung Paik, Television and the American Child (San Diego: Academic P, 1991) x.

[157]Pool, Talking Back 2.

Don R. Le Duc contended, in 1973, that two-way communication systems would have the greatest effect on the role of electronic media systems in society.[158] Success of such systems could even result in an end to the traditional role of mass media systems:

> Thus, direct feedback could well result in the reversal of the traditional roles of mass communications, making the communicator little more than a common carrier in a communications process controlled by each individual subscriber. In such a humanized atmosphere broad governmental control may no longer be necessary, except perhaps for the type of supervision of rates and service exercised over other private communications carriers.[159]

William T. Knox, also in 1973, argued that CATV systems should operate as many as half of their channels as public service common carriers, open to all groups and individuals.[160] Denis McQuail, in 1975, noted that the possible changes that new communication technologies would bring would be diverse:

> Another challenge to the existing pattern of application of technology comes from the development of new systems of distribution, in particular satellite transmission, cable dissemination or microwave transmission, which may be put to new public uses and directly alter the communication institutions of society. The potential is for change which will make television distribution at the same time more international, more local, more interactive, and less constraining for the receiver.[161]

James C. Shrouse, also in 1975, contended that the changes in communications would be revolutionary: "It promises to do what McLuhan and Alvin Toffler suggested the electronic media will do – change the essence of our lives and the lives of everyone wired."[162]

Restructuring of the communications environment in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s resulted in two distinct views of the future. McLuhan's "global village" maintained the

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[158]Don R. Le Duc, Cable Television and the FCC: A Crisis in Media Control (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1973) 15.

[159]Le Duc 15.

[160]William T. Knox , " Problems of Communications in Large Cities," Talking Back: Citizen Feedback and Cable Technology, ed. Ithiel de Sola Pool (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1973) 110.

[161]Denis McQuail, Communication (London: Longman, 1975) 90.

[162]Shrouse 267.

collective notion of social organization and on a much broader scale. Eli Noam contended that the notion of an "integrated services digital network," which would provide simultaneously voice, text, and images on a single copper wire or a fiber optic strand, represented a continuation of the network model for communication that the telephone company had represented.[163] The model was not quite interactive, with delivery of services to the network users. Another view of the future was that of Huber's "geodesic dome," connections of nodes that each maintained autonomy from other nodes. Noam contended that the notion of "open network architecture" represented this view.[164] The Internet, which the Defense Department inaugurated in 1969 to provide a decentralized communications system in case of nuclear attack, offers a refinement of this communications model of linked nodes.[165]

The participatory idea of mass communication represented one aspect of centralization. Through simultaneous receipt of messages, audience members were participating collectively in social, economic, and political processes. Such participation through media use helped to establish or maintain group identity, from an international scale to a neighborhood scale. The mass media were central sources of information for dissemination to audience members. Reaction or feedback was not immediate, but medium or programming choices were key to business decisions on media and programming choice.

Development of interactive communication systems, beginning in the 1960s, held the promise that individuals could play an even greater role in the selection of entertainment fare, in access to and retrieval of information, and as initiators as well as receivers of information. As Jordan J. Baruch had noted in 1969, a third form of communication was

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[163]Noam 44.

[164]Noam 44.

[165]Ed Krol, The Whole Internet User's Guide and Catalog, 2nd. ed. (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly and Associates, 1992) 5.

available that included components of mass communication and point-to-point communication.[166] Although Qube and the newspaper videotex systems allowed some interactivity, they were preliminary to a full household communications and information center connected to national and international data repositories and to similar centers in other homes around the neighborhood and around the world. Participation in communication processes would be direct, but what would be the societal effects? Ithiel de Sola Pool, in 1973, noted the dilemma: "Communication can be made individualized and responsive. But when it is made individualized and responsive, will it help society to cohere better by making group interaction more meaningful, or will it tend to tear society apart by removing the element of commonality in what is communicated? It could do either or even both at once."[167]

Although some proponents of the two-way cable television discussed rebuilding of community, they were not speaking in the "global village" context that McLuhan popularized. They were speaking instead of providing information infrastructures for ethnic and minority groups that did not have access to the mass media as content providers, not as content recipients. The channel diversity of cable television and its capability for two-way transmission of information offered an opportunity for targeting of audiences and providing internal communication resources for communities and groups. Videotex industry executives, in 1984, questioned whether their services ever would become mass media: "Although videotex may fail as a mass medium, it may succeed as a medium for conveying specialized information to specific groups or for intracorporate communications."[168]

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[166]Baruch 3.

[167]Pool, Talking Back 7.

[168]"Videotex Industry Searches for Salvation," Broadcasting 23 April 1984: 41.

Interactive Communication

Transition in the communications environment brought analysis, in the 1980s, of the study of communication itself, particularly with convergence of mass media systems and point-to-point communication systems that facilitated interpersonal communication. Rudy Bretz and Michael Schmidbauer, in 1983, noted the paradox of mass communication: "Mass communication has practically been one-way. 'Two-way mass communication' would be considered a conflict in terms."[169] Gary Gumpert and Robert Cathcart, in 1982, contended that study of mass communication had failed to examine processes of communication and study of interpersonal communication had failed to examine the context of communication: "What has been lost in this quest for territory and identity are the inherent connections which make communication an on-going process."[170] Gumpert and Cathcart argued that communication is "a process in which each part affects the other part and no one part can be fully understood apart from the whole."[171]

In a dialogue for the Journal of Communication in 1983, Everett M. Rogers and Steven H. Chaffee noted the transition in communication and communication studies. Rogers noted the emergence of "interactive" communication systems:

> These systems operate around computers that provide the interactivity element. So the computer is becoming a special type of communication channel, rather than mainly a means of data crunching. Scholars are going to have to shift toward models that accommodate the interactivity of most of the new communication technologies. New paradigms are needed, based on new intellectual terminology.[172]

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[169]Rudy Bretz and Michael Schmidbauer, Media for Interactive Communication (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1983) 10.

[170]Gary Gumpert and Robert Cathcart, Inter/Media: Interpersonal Communication in a Media World (New York: Oxford UP, 1982) 10.

[171]Gumpert and Cathcart 12.

[172]Everett M. Rogers and Steven H. Chaffee, Communication as an Academic Discipline: A Dialogue," Journal of Communication 33.3 (1983): 25-6.

Chaffee indicated that "mass" had come to mean only mass production and not mass reception: "Even in a computer-dominated age, there will continue to be mass production of a sort, but the mass audience notion will become even more archaic. In the 'audience' of a computer-based interactive system, each individual gets and gives different messages."[173]

Charles W. Steinfield and Janet Fulk, in 1988, acknowledged that computer-based interactive communication did not have the mass audience of broadcasting, for example, but the new medium "provides for the simultaneous distribution of the same message to geographically dispersed potential audiences numbering in the tens, hundreds, or thousands."[174] Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach and Kathleen Reardon, also in 1988, addressed the question of whether interactive communication technologies represented extensions of existing forms of mass communication or interpersonal communication or a third form of human communication.[175] Their suggestion of a third form, "telelogic" communication, included elements of traditional elements of both interpersonal and mass communication:

> We can no longer fragment our areas of expertise into the study of interpersonal communication or mass communication. The emergence of the telelogic communication form fosters greater breadth, because it is both different from and similar to interpersonal and mass communication, and it is also likely to have effects upon the nature of interpersonal and mass communication forms.[176]

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[173]Rogers and Chaffee 26.

[174]Charles W. Steinfield and Janet Fulk, "Computer-Mediated Communication Systems as Mass Communication Media," Telecommunications Policy Research Conference, Airlie House, VA, October 1988. 2.

[175]Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach and Kathleen Reardon, "Monologue, Dialogue, and Telelog: Comparing an Emergent Form of Communication with Traditional Forms," Advancing Communication Science: Merging Mass and Interpersonal Communication, ed. Robert P. Hawkins, John M. Wiemann, and Suzanne Pingree (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1988) 135.

[176]Ball-Rokeach and Reardon 159.

Mass Requiem

Technological advances from broadcasting to cable television to computer-based interactive services have resulted in varying, and sometimes grand, expectations of social benefits and even social organization. Changes in technology were concurrent with changing social, political and economic conditions and perspectives on the role of the group and the individual in society. The final chapter will examine these technological advances and their contexts in light of the idea of participatory mass communication and the larger theoretical framework of ideas as agents of social action.

Of particular interest is whether mass communication was a social construction of a specific time period and of a time period that has passed. Did the development of interactive communications systems provide a third level of communication, after interpersonal communication and mass communication? Or do interactive communication systems merely highlight the internal contradictions of the notion of mass communication itself?

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Non-physical, social or intellectual, constructions play a role in the conduct of human action, and evaluations of these constructions require analytical tools that do not depend totally upon empirical measurements. While communication may serve as the site for non-physical construction and a medium for the interaction of these constructions, the academic discipline of mass communication also provides an opportunity to test an evaluative framework for ideas as agents of social action. Communication as a social condition or as a process to maintain a social condition has been a component of public and academic discourse since the nature of human interaction has been under study. Construction of mass communication as participation in social, economic, and political processes has been a component of public discourse in the United States since, at least, the 1920s and the introduction of broadcasting. A review of the development and evolution of the participatory idea of mass communication shows that a proposed evaluative framework for ideas as agents of social action provides a useful tool for analysis but does not effectively measure the validity of the idea under study nor establish fully its specific role in creating or altering public policy.

Analyses of three periods of US history, the 1920s, the 1970s, and the 1980s, find the participatory idea of communication in place as new communication technologies were coming into use and prominence. The inauguration and rapid growth of broadcasting in the 1920s, debate about the expansion of cable television into major urban areas in the early 1970s, and the introduction of interactive communication systems in the 1970s and 1980s

came amid conflicting constructions of mass communication and its effects in society. Policy-makers and industry executives endorsed the social promise of the new technologies to advance the economic fortunes of the new technologies. Such promotion resulted in disappointment on two fronts. Those who endorsed the social promise of communication technologies found disappointment after successful advancement of the economic fortune of the technologies failed to bring anticipated social returns. Promotion of the social promise of the new technologies also raised expectations about the inclusion of all segments of US society in the social benefits. Failure of inclusion, despite technological advancement, also brought disappointment. The access movement in the 1970s attempted, with limited success, to give individuals and groups roles in the origination of content for distribution through mass media. Although cable television appeared to offer opportunities both for transmission of broadcast-like content to mass audiences and for narrowcasting to special-interest groups, the financial success of the first enterprise helped to limit, along with court decisions and public apathy, the success of narrowcasting.

Development of interactive technologies essentially changed both the site for participation and the nature of the discourse about the participatory idea of mass communication. The technologies offered actual participation of audience members in the origination of content and from the convenience of their homes. Audience members' involvement would be direct and not a socially constructed or intellectually constructed participation. Such a transformation also undermined the participatory idea of mass communication since the limitations of simultaneous receipt of mass communication message became readily evident with "interactive" communication systems and the promise of full participation in communication processes.

Limitations

The evaluative framework, in use, does not provide the means to determine the validity of the participatory idea at any point in its history but rather only can analyze its use in competition with other ideas. Such limitations may make the framework unappealing to those who seek empirical testing of validity, but the framework does provide a basis for analysis of ideas in competition. In the case of the participatory idea of mass communication, that framework provided perspectives not available from other approaches to mass communication research and which identify mass communication as a process, a milieu, or an institution. Refinement of the evaluative framework is necessary for analysis of ideas not specifically related to communication, but use of such a framework offers new opportunities for analysis when social and intellectual constructions are in competition in a post-modern environment. The key elements of the framework are: what is the idea, what was its purpose, what were its origins, how and under what conditions did it evolve, with what ideas was it in competition, and what was its effectiveness. The last element, in regard to the effectiveness, may require use of empirical tools. The context of effectiveness also requires closer evaluation. Presence of an idea in public or academic discourse or policy debate is not a measure of its effectiveness. Analyses of an idea's origins, evolution, and competitors provide a necessary grounding for such empirical inquiries. The value of the evaluation framework principally is heuristic.

The evaluative framework also can provide a foundation for an intellectual model of communication that posits communication as the currency of ideas and as the site for the negotiation of reality. Such a model could establish communication and communication studies as inheritors from religion of the premodern era and science of the modern era of the status as the intellectual center of a post-modern world. Such a model also is in need of much greater refinement.

Genealogy of an Idea

The following is a summary of the analyses of the genealogy of the participatory idea of mass communication:

I. What were the theoretical, philosophical, and practical foundations for the idea of participatory mass communication?

The participatory idea of mass communication was an extension of the social model of communication, which had its foundations in sociological theories of community, social organization, and structural functionalism. Promoters of the idea promoted the notion of the re-establishment of the premodern "village," in which technological advances would link individuals as empathy or interpersonal bonds had at some earlier point. Broadcasting, in the 1920s, provided the simultaneous transmission of messages. Television added simultaneous images to simultaneous sounds. Cable television offered greater channel capacity. Cable television also offered narrowcasting and two-way transmission of messages, which raised new questions about participation.

II. What was the purpose of the idea?

Mass communication as participation, as the social model of communication in general, offered a unifying force for the nation as a whole as well as constituent parts of the nation. The notion of mass communication as participation served to replace direct social linkages. The idea also served normative functions with the contentions that improved communication would promote social order or social organization or that improved communication would enhance decision-making because of receipt of necessary information resources.

III. Under what conditions did the idea gain currency?

The prominence of the participatory idea of mass communication in the 1920s may result from the social dislocations of World War I and of new modes of transportation and communication, including radio. Radio, for the first time, allowed simultaneous receipt of messages and the perception, at least, of sharing information and, perhaps, emotion.

Concurrent with the beginning of broadcasting were the social divisions of Prohibition, the Ku Klux Klan, the Immigration Act of 1924, and the Great Migration of blacks from the South to the North.

Studies of public opinion, propaganda, public relations, and social psychology at the time provided an indication of attempts to understand social interaction on some scale other than individual. Despite the negative connotation of propaganda after World War I, Harold Lasswell and Edward L. Bernays indicated that propaganda is no more, or less, than a means to form public opinion. To form public opinion in a widespread population required modes of communication that were then becoming available. Mass communication, as a descriptive term, sounds more appealing than mass propaganda, mass propagation, or even mass distribution.

In 1927, Marshall D. Beuick examined the new phenomenon of broadcasting and decided that its social effects would be minimal, particularly in urban areas, because radio had an influence of isolation and not congregation. Radio would keep people apart, not bring them together. Beuick's analysis soon received a rebuttal from Eugene W. Burgess, who argued that radio was providing new ways for individuals to participate in social and political affairs.

Use of the term "mass communication" coincided with the development of broadcasting, although mass distribution of messages had been possible with earlier media. Broadcasting as a technology provided no real means for interaction but did provide the simultaneous receipt of messages. Readers perused their newspapers at their own leisure and at their own pace. Radio listeners heard simultaneously the same words, and early television viewers, before the development of VCRs, saw simultaneously the same pictures. Mass communication came to mean the multiple sharing of experiences, but each listener's reaction to broadcast was discrete. As Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton noted, the reception of information also created a perception of action, even if no action took place beyond the mere receipt of the message.

Although mass communication involves limited personal exchange or interaction, a frequent contention is that individuals are vicariously sharing in an "electronic" community, Teledyne's "Radioland," for example. Each interaction, however, was discrete, and the total experience was an aggregate of those discrete experiences. William McDougall's "group mind" and perhaps the notion of "public opinion" itself promoted the idea of a collective experience beyond the limitations of the aggregate of individual experiences. In such a collective experience, mass communication provides at least a vicarious connection.

IV. How did the idea change or evolve over time?

The idea remained fairly constant through the development and nearly full penetration of television in the United States. By the early 1970s, development of cable television brought more discussions of the normative role of communication in promotion of social order and the need for even more television, through expanded cable channel diversity, to address social needs. Development of low-cost and portable television production equipment in the 1970s and the increased channel capacity of cable television encouraged those who sought support for greater involvement of individuals and groups in the origination of television content. The access movement illustrated an evolution of the participatory idea of mass communication to include more direct involvement of individuals in the communication process through such origination of content. The participatory idea of mass communication underwent further modification in the 1970s and early 1980s with the beginnings of interactive communications systems. Two-way cable television and videotex were in line with the transformation of the telephone system from a network to a nodal system. Participation was on an individual rather than a congregational basis with the technological possibility of full participation in the communication process.

V. What external conditions brought these changes?

Changes in the idea of participatory mass communication reflected changes in social, political, and economic conditions of the time. The changes also reflected technological changes. Development of broadcasting with its simultaneous delivery of

messages offered an opportunity for assumptions of participation. Similarly, cable television provided both the opportunity for increased channel capacity and alternatives to mass communication. Narrow-casting would allow targeting of specific audiences and two-way transmission would allow some greater role for audience members in the communication process. Development of fully interactive services allowed even greater audience participation and even audience control of the communication process.

Social unrest in the 1960s also raised questions about the participatory idea of mass communication since television had penetration in more than 90% of US homes. Although the view of mass communication as participatory continued, analysts observed that mass communication also was divisive and could have simultaneous cohesive and divisive effects on the basis of receipt of mass communication messages and the context of the receipt of those messages.

VI. What alternatives to the idea existed through time?

The participatory idea of mass communication, as an extension of the social model, faced competition from the economic model, with the view of communication as a source of information for rational decision making and as a commodity. Mass media provided a profit for their owners as well as information resources to the public. Failure to make a profit was tantamount to not providing adequate service to consumers, since such service could not long continue.

Also opposing the participatory viewpoint was the notion of mass society, in which communication supported the status quo and helped to exploit atomized individuals. Interactive communication itself was a challenge to the participatory idea of mass communication since full participation of individuals in the communication process highlighted the lack of audience participation in the receipt of mass communication.

VII. What were the internal contradictions, if any, of the idea?

The participatory idea of mass communication presumes that members of the audience are receiving or sharing the same messages. Such a notion presupposes that

receipt of the same messages is possible. Although the mass media project the same messages to audience members, audience members perceive and reconstruct the messages on the basis of their individual socializations.

Another contradiction of the idea involves the target of unity. Although those who espoused the participatory idea of communication did not necessarily specify their target audiences, the nature of mass communication, specifically broadcasting, did not limit the audience to certain audiences. Such messages of unity may have raised expectations of inclusion that US society was not ready to effect. In the 1920s, optimism for the unifying nature of mass communication seemed in direct contradiction to the social divisions of the time. While the intent of the unification effort might have been to preserve middle-class society or middle-class values, societal divisions undermined those efforts.

Similarly, in the 1960s and 1970s, the nearly full penetration of television was in direct contrast to social and political unrest. Analysts at the time indicated that television could have simultaneous and conflicting effects in regard to social cohesion. Promoters of the unifying role of communication never fully clarified how to make the process inclusive. Mass communication could have the capacity to restore community but inherent in the notion of the "village" was the similarity of inhabitants. Never clear, in these discussions, was how to restore the village with diverse inhabitants.

What may be lost in an "electronic" community or in formation of an "electronic" consensus is any opportunity for personal interaction or the process of consensus. The individual is not able to negotiate with a mass communication representation. Viewers can accept or reject the message, but they cannot immediately interact with the representation. They can end their receipt of messages, but they cannot directly alter their contents. Personal relationships, however, result from a process of negotiation. Although Louis Wirth tried to link mass communication and consensus, consensus also is a result of negotiations. All make concessions for the common good. The result is not the totality of what any one individual wants. This process is in contrast to presentation of a proposition,

perhaps through mass communication, that one can either accept or reject but over which no negotiation occurs.

VIII. What was the efficacy of the idea?

The participatory idea of mass communication served essentially as a tool to create or preserve social order amid social divisions and changes in means of transportation and communication. Determining the efficacy of this idea is beyond the capability of this framework. Questions about the effectiveness of the participatory role of mass communication in the 1970s resulted in discussion of other participation alternatives for communication, specifically the interactive electronic communication that two-way cable television and videotex represented. Development of cable television, VCRs, and computer-mediated communication in the 1980s and 1990s helped to supplant the idea of participatory mass communication. Promotion of the idea of participatory mass communication may have resulted in a great sense of social fragmentation with its failures.

Internal contradictions of the idea of participatory mass communication included the one-way flow of information from media institutions to individual audience members and the lack of an opportunity for negotiation between mass media institutions and audience members. The idea of participatory mass communication also failed to acknowledge individual perception and processing of mass media messages to the detriment of the simultaneous receipt of common information. Interactive communication systems allow the negotiation of reality that traditional mass communication systems do not provide.

An Evaluative Tool?

Ideas as agents of social action provide a useful evaluative tool with some qualifiers. Isolating an idea may be difficult as may be discerning the historical foundations for an idea. An essential issue is the question of proof. What constitutes a sufficient foundation for grounding or acceptance of an idea? Numerous references exist in regard to the idea of mass communication as a participatory process, but isolation of those references

provides only an evaluative framework, and use of empirical tools would be necessary for any measurement of effectiveness. Promotion of the social benefits of cable television was evident in public discourse about regulation of the medium, but any number of political, economic, and social factors played roles in the FCC's adoption of the Third Report and Order and Congressional approval of the Cable Communications Act of 1984.

Such policy-making situations also may not be available for evaluation. In the 1920s and 1930s, Congress approved the Radio Act and the Communications Act to regulate broadcasting. In the 1980s, no policy-making decisions for interactive technology were readily available for evaluation. Although the Cable Communications Act of 1984 provided a bail-out for cable companies in regard to provision of two-way cable transmission and other franchise inducements, discourse about the removal of the requirement centered on contractual obligations between cities and franchise holders and not on the merits of interactive communication or services. The FCC's computer inquiries and the Modified Final Judgment generally did not provide public participation, and interactive technology has not faced a policy-making debate until congressional deliberations, in 1994 and 1995, of reform of the Communications Act of 1934.

Regulatory and social debates in the 1920s, the 1970s, and the 1980s do provide an opportunity to examine ideas in conflict. Connotations of mass communication were much in debate as efforts came to determine its impact on social, political and economic decisions. Mass media were subject of particular derision, essentially for their "massness." Debates about mass communication had at their roots questions about the relationship between individuals and their societies. What is the role of the individual in creating society? What is the role of society in creating the individual? Does failure of collective action harm the individual? Is collective action possible with mass communication? The evaluative framework, in this case, can only raise more questions. Use of the framework does suggest that adoption of an intellectual model of communication might be useful in addition to use of social and economic models of communication.

Intellectual Model

The social construction of mass communication as participation is counter to the notion of mass communication as the mere presentation of information, as the transfer of culture, or as the hegemonic domination of individuals. Lowell Juillard Carr at the end of the 1920s indicated that public opinion is a dynamic readjustment to changing conditions. The social construction of mass communication as participation would seem an effective readjustment to the social and political fragmentations of the 1920s. Such adjustments continued through the 1960s and 1970s as television became the dominant mass medium and provided even a greater opportunity for the idea of participation.

Development of interactive technologies that allow multiple or even mass contacts for individuals as well as institutions is raising necessary questions about social constructions of mass communication. If the social construction of mass communication as mass participation has helped to maintain social order, what will be the result if interactive technologies replace mass media? If mass communication is a necessary surrogate for active participation in a complex society, what will be the result if that surrogate is not in place or is less effective? Another question for further research is whether current perceptions of increased social fragmentation are the result of the unmet ideal of unity that the social construction of mass communication as participation provided. An intellectual model of communication could provide another approach to addressing these questions.

The following is an outline of such a model:

Communication helps to maintain social order through negotiation of reality. The intellectual model of communication includes a disjunctive process of construction and projection of a message and then perception and reconstruction of the message by the receiver of the message. The disjunction prevents full correspondence between construction and reconstruction and allows negotiation as a basis of reconstruction. The model applies to perceptions and reconstructions of reality as well as to communication between humans. Such a model allows the existence of a physical, objective reality and the

existence of individual, subjective realities and could allow a convergence of the divergent school of mass communication theories.

In the course of constructions and reconstructions of messages, individuals use socially and culturally derived ideas. Construction and reconstruction are subjective processes. Means of projection and capabilities for perception also may alter the correspondence between construction and reconstruction. Such a model provides for negotiation of reality since lack of correspondence may result in compensatory measures. Communication gains importance as the currency of ideas, the exchange and negotiation of constructions and reconstructions of physical reality or message.

Post-modernism, in its varied forms, recognizes the inherent reality of ideas and gives primacy to ideas. The challenge of the post-modern era is to develop the means for analysis and evaluation of the non-physical universe of ideas. Such a challenge does not preclude the need for empirical tools as the analysis in this dissertation illustrated. In the intellectual model, the empirical tools provide a necessary representation of the fixed, objective reality. The empirical findings are a component of the analysis and do not constitute the analysis, however.

Future Research

Refinement of the evaluative framework of ideas as agents of social action and of an intellectual model of communication provides a full agenda for research. Further assessment of the evaluative framework requires its use with an idea not specifically related to communication. Refinement of the intellectual model of communication also will require further refinement of the social and economic models of communication.

Also ahead is use of this framework and model in analysis of the drafting and passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and its effects on the communications environment in the United States. As time passes, passage of that act may provide the best test for the evaluative framework since the Third Report and Order in 1972.

Implementation of the act also will provide opportunities for further analyses of the implementation and use of interactive communication technologies in the context of the social, economic, and intellectual models.

	Radio Broadcasting -1920s	Broadcasting and Cable TV –1970s	Interactive Technologies –1970s and 1980s
Purpose	National unity	National unity	Social order
		Social order	Access and political diversity
		Access and political diversity	
Application	Congregational		
Evolution		Participant as provider of content	Participant as provider of content
			Nodal; direct interaction
Factors in Evolution		Cable television channel capacity, narrowcasting capability	Cable television two-way transmission
		Lower costs, portability of TV production equipment	Convergence of computer, telephone technologies
Alternatives	Broadcasting as isolating	Broadcasting as divisive	Direct interaction
		Mass society	
Internal Contradictions	One-way transmission	One-way transmission	
	Individual response to messages	Individual response to messages	Individual response to messages

Figure 7-1. The participatory idea of mass communication

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William J. Leonhirth entered the PhD program in the College of Journalism and Communications of the University of Florida in 1992 after working twenty years as a newspaper reporter and editor in Tennessee and Alabama. He received a BA, with majors in international relations and history, from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro in 1973. He earned an MA in public affairs journalism from American University in Washington, DC, in 1977. While in the doctoral program, Leonhirth conducted research in the societal effects of new communications technologies, the role of communication in social movements, and intellectual history. Leonhirth also served as graduate assistant for the college's Interactive Media Lab and administrative assistant for the Sun.ONE electronic newspaper project. Leonhirth is an assistant professor of communications at the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

David H. Ostroff, Chair
Professor of Journalism and Communications

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Ralph L. Lowenstein,
Professor of Journalism and Communications

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

F. Leslie Smith
Professor of Journalism and Communications

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Leonard P. Tipton
Professor of Journalism and Communications

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Hernan Vera
Professor of Sociology

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Journalism and Communications and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August, 1996

Dean, College of Journalism and Communications

Dean, Graduate School